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Being Korean and being Christian: identity making in the Korean Baptist Church of Baton Rouge in the U.S. Deep South

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**BEING KOREAN AND BEING CHRISTIAN
IDENTITY MAKING IN THE KOREAN BAPTIST CHURCH OF BATON
ROUGE IN THE U.S. DEEP SOUTH**

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

in

The Department of Geography and Anthropology

By
Hyeon Ju Lee
B.S. Louisiana State University, 1997
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ABSTRACT

The post-1965 generation Korean immigrants in the U.S., who have left their country for betterment of their lives, find themselves unable to acculturate to the U.S. mainstream culture. Although legally Americans, these Koreans strive to hold onto their culture they brought with them. A group of Koreans who belong to this post-1965 immigrant generation in Baton Rouge established a church to share religious and cultural experience while speaking Korean language and sharing Korean food--The Korean Baptist Church of Baton Rouge.

The members of the Korean Baptist Church of Baton Rouge ("the Church") create a familial community within Christian and Confucian ideology. Christianity guides the members' spiritual lives; Confucian codes dictate their social behavior. The roles and responsibilities the members carry out resemble that of a family structure prescribed by Confucian ideology, and biblical teachings and Protestant beliefs reinforce the maintenance of the Korean church community in Baton Rouge.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Although published in 1930s, Ruth Benedict's *Patterns of Culture* gives us a succinct and appropriate explanation of inseparable relationship between a culture and people: "[individual] is the little creature of his culture," and this "culture" belongs to a group of people (a society) who share the same language, food, beliefs, laws, and clothing (1934:3). However, when members of a culture no longer wish to stay within it and reposition themselves in a different society, incoherence in cultural rhythm can create disorientation for the immigrants. Wittgenstein's arguments shine a light on this in his following statement as quoted in Geertz's *Interpretation of Culture*:

We...say of some people that they are transparent to us. It is, however, important as regards this observation that one human being can be a complete enigma to another. We learn this when we come into a strange country with entirely strange traditions. We do not understand the people. (And not because of not knowing what they are saying to themselves.) We cannot find out feet with them. (1973: 13)

"Finding feet" is exactly what Koreans in the United States are not being able to achieve. This daunting task of learning a new set of symbols, values, and ideas is not as easy as they may have thought. Korean immigrants in Baton Rouge also have not yet found the feet to dance to American cultural rhythm. What they have found instead is a place within which they can practice Korean culture from the old country. Within this place, the members of the Korean Baptist Church of Baton Rouge (referred to as "the Church" from here on) are able to share their personal, immigration experiences and learn about the U.S. systems from the earlier immigrants when adjusting their lives in the new country.

My awareness of the struggle by ethnic Koreans in Baton Rouge began when I was immersed in my studies in Anthropology at Louisiana State University. To me, Koreans

seemed to lead somewhat peripheral lives in the city. Most of Korean students at Louisiana State University (LSU) admired anyone with good command in English that enabled the person to easily socialize with American students; many of Korean owned businesses were located in economically poor and ethnically African American areas. Although many of the post-1965 Korean immigrants came “from professional, white-collar, and highly educated backgrounds,” except for a few food related businesses, most small business owners tended to build their businesses in lower income earning areas due to the fact that they were “unable to find jobs in the United States that [were] commensurate with their premigration background” (Kibria 2002:24). Koreans’ tendency to stay within Korean community in Baton Rouge appeared simultaneously voluntary and involuntary. One of the interesting patterns of Korean immigration was that since the late 1980s, the number of Korean immigrants in the United States began to decrease. At the same time, the number of students whose intentions were to earn education, not livelihood, increased. Evidently, the older generation of the Church consisted of the post-1965 Korean immigrants; the younger generation belonged to the temporary Koreans.

During the research, using the previously described Korean people’s tendency to adhere to their ethnic community, I wanted to look at the social, cultural, and religious adjustment/adaptation of the post-1965 Korean immigrants in Baton Rouge, and their relationships with transient Korean students and researchers within the Korean Baptist Church of Baton Rouge (Figure 1). I examined the Koreans’ religious practices that were heavily intertwined with Confucian cultural codes.



Figure 1. Korean Baptist Church of Baton Rouge (before parking lot construction)

The social interactions among the Church members exhibited the elder-younger, male-female interactions according to Confucian rules, but since the members of the Church were voluntary Christians, Christian values from the Bible also influenced social interactions, in that the members encouraged each other to practice: sacrifice, humility, generosity, and love toward others. In the Church, Koreans created a speech community, a spiritual community, and an ethnic community.

This thesis is an ethnographic description of how the Koreans in Baton Rouge use the Church as a place for defining religious, spiritual, and cultural identity in an attempt to find their own “feet” in the American Deep South. Before going into the ethnographical descriptions in chapters 4,5, and 6, background information on the history of Christianity in Korea and Confucian cultural elements that have influenced Korean people is introduced in chapter two. Chapter three discusses research methods and fieldwork experiences. This chapter also describes my informants, their socio-ethnic experience in America, and their views on roles of the Church for Koreans in Baton Rouge. The

significance of my informants' roles within the Church are muted due to their female gender, but this muted voice transcends into personal prayers to God and becomes a spiritual comfort rather than a frustration. Their roles as a mother, daughter, aunt and grandmother in the Church give them sense of belonging and placement within the Church structure. Chapter four looks at the Church's brief history, defines the term "member" used in this research, and describes the social, cultural, and religious interaction among the members. The members are categorized into two main groups according to their demographic, social status. This chapter also describes different units within the Church. I have made a distinction between administrative units and the Church's ministry units to differentiate their roles in secular and sacred realms and to show the power structure within the Church. The administrative units focus on "domestic" affairs, such as finance, building maintenance, cooking, cleaning, and sharing information. These units carry out functions an ordinary household performs. On the contrary, the ministry units' main functions are evangelism, spiritual guidance, counseling, and missionary work. Although I have separated these units, sometimes the same people occupy seats in both units. Chapter five describes the worship sequences, responsibility of each unit on Sundays, and other religious holidays and celebratory occasions observed according to Christian tradition. Then I discuss how Confucian tradition is subdued yet incorporated in the Christian religious practices. The Baptist ministry dominates religious discourse in the main Sunday services. However, when the Baptist evangelism is translated in Korean tongue, inevitably Confucian analogies follow. Chapter six describes the culinary practices among the Women's Missionary Association and roles of women in the Church. Women in the Church act upon as meal-providers,

devoted spiritual supporters, teachers, and workers who will carry out tasks that are not overtly significant and praiseworthy. Whether they are student-wives or wives of small business owners, they assume subordinate roles of supporters. While staying at home, the women provide a place her family can rest; when at the Church, the women provide a place the members can share fellowship during which members share their problems, exchange information, and offer consulting/counseling to each other. This last ethnographic chapter also discusses the meaning of sharing Korean food among the members. Sunday lunches and meals shared at aforementioned occasions, along with the common Korean language culturally secure the communal relationship among the members.

The final chapter summarizes the thesis and suggests further researches on immigrants' use of institutions in a new place as means to maintaining their ethnicity and adjusting to the new environment.

CHAPTER 2. BACKGROUND

Since the passage of the 1965 Immigration act, Korean immigrants have come to the U.S. to better lives of their family (Kim 1986: 14-15, Hurh 1998: 31-32). When Koreans arrived in the U.S, the majority relied on institutions such as churches. Unlike other Chinese or Japanese immigrants who received support from regional and kinship affiliations when they arrived the United States, as Kim points out “Korean immigrants,” who lacked such regional, geographic, and kinship affiliation ties in the U.S., “created entirely different institutions [from Chinese or Japanese]: namely churches ... Because of the diversity of Korean immigrants and their differing interests, various organizations again began to develop in Korean communities across America. Most were social, religious, educational, and political organizations” (1986:20-21). Those Koreans who immigrated during this period included the Korean immigrants who have attended the Korean Baptist Church of Baton Rouge.

The Church provided an access to a Korean social network and a place to create a concrete identity as Koreans in Baton Rouge; it represented a vehicle for cultural preservation rather than one for acculturation. Korean immigrants to new countries typically strived to maintain their ethnic identity and stayed within Korean communities.

This pattern of ethnic cohesion was historical:

Indeed, traditionally, Koreans have always tended to maintain their own ethnic and cultural identity. Today, there are about 2 million Koreans in Manchuria, 400,000 Koreans in the Soviet Union, and 600,000 Koreans in Japan. These Koreans as minority groups have survived strong pressure from the majority culture and largely maintained their own language, customs, and other elements of their culture. Even in the 20th century, under harsh colonial rule, Koreans tenaciously resisted unrelenting pressure from the Japanese to annihilate their way of life, and succeeded in preserving their own culture intact. (Kim and Yoo, 1988:7)

Korean immigrants in Baton Rouge also exhibited this cultural pattern of remaining within Korean communities as illustrated in the following passage:

Korean immigrants all arrive from South Korea, and all share a common language and national identification. Once they are in the United States, most Koreans affiliate with Korean immigrant churches and join at least one ethnic association, thus further enhancing the solidarity that is suggested by premigration commonalities. (Min 1995: 215).

Sharing a common language and social practices allowed Koreans to maintain their ethnic identity and simultaneously set them apart from other social groups. Korean immigrants in Baton Rouge also exhibited this pattern of close ties with the Church and shared Korean as a common language. Most social, cultural, and religious activities took place within the Church periphery. The Church provided a place for worship and functioned as an important social, cultural center that offers psychological support and ethnic solidarity for Koreans.

Korea was known for being the most Confucian society of all Asian countries (Palley 1990:1140). At the same time, Korea was the second nation among Christian nations to send out the most Christian missionaries to the world (Pastor So, personal interview). Since the advent of missionaries' arrival in early 19th century in Korea, Christianity, particularly Protestantism, has influenced the people in many areas. As a result, contemporary Korean culture entailed both Confucian and Christian elements. Introduced as the last religion in Korea, the growth and influence of Christianity were stronger than other religions with longer history such as Buddhism or Daoism.

During the *Chosun* Dynasty (1392-1910), "Confucianism replaced Buddhism as the national religion" (Kang, 1995:162). Confucianism was introduced to Korea earlier in time, but it was during this later period when it became the national religion. Confucian social codes have dominated social interactions among Koreans, and although many

contemporary Koreans thought they were not Confucian, their everyday life required possession of Confucian norms. These Confucian codes included filial piety, obedience to the superior, and female fidelity (Korean Overseas Information Service 1993:128, 146, 150, Hurh 1998:15). Translated into social contexts, these codes demanded that: the younger respected the older for their knowledge and experience; men (father before marriage, husband after marriage, and the son after the husband's death for a woman) rule women/wives. Koreans of the Church in this research also relied on those Confucian social codes when interacting with each other. The elders were respected, and the young obeyed; males dominated important positions within the Church, and females carried out work assigned to them. Indeed, the Church community may be viewed as a family unit within which each member assumed a role of a father, mother, son, daughter, uncle, aunt, or grandparents, under the spiritual guidance of the Holy Ghost. In this familial structure, each figure respected and was respected, ruled and obeyed, and led and followed.

Due to Confucianism's place as the official religion of the *Chosun* dynasty, Christianity entered Korea less than a religion and as more of a scholarly material. Many Korean scholars of this period began to accept Christianity as practical science and philosophy of progressive modernity (Lane and McCormack, 1993:7). Confucianism, whose focus of rituals was ancestral worship, was a religion without a God, and this absence of a supernatural, omniscient figure resulted in dissatisfaction among scholars, who were truth seekers (Hurh 1998:15). The scholars were frustrated with the stagnant growth in society prescribed by the rigidity of the Confucian order and began to adopt Christianity, particularly Catholicism introduced by European Jesuits, as practical science and philosophy.

Discontented yet eager-hearted intellectuals of that age were seeking the new light coming from the outside world... To their utmost dismay they found that the traditional truth was not “the” truth at all, but an arbitrary enforcement... The natural sciences were an integral part of the “*philosophie chrétienne*” of the early Jesuits. Therefore while acquiring scientific information, the receiving parties were also initiated into some aspects of the Christian doctrines proper, though indirectly (Chung 2001: 29, 34-35).

The ruling, upper class scholars adopted this new religion as a new subject to study.

However, the religious nature of Christianity that challenged the existing Confucian order began to influence the scholars to convert. This subversive nature of Christianity eventually met imperial opposition (Howe 1988:115, Lee 1984:240). The *Chosun* imperial court ordered the interdiction of Christianity. Subsequently, however, the ban on Christianity was reversed, and with the official arrival of missionaries, Rev. H.G. Appenzeller and Underwood in 1885 (Shearer 1966:164), and Christianity began to bloom in Korea.

With the official arrival of the missionaries, Protestantism spread throughout Korean peninsula. Success of the Christian ministry of these missionaries from England and the United States coincided with Korea’s wish to modernize during the late 19th century (Korean Overseas Information Service, 1993). The following passage written by Syngman Rhee(1875-1965)¹, who was a Confucian scholar turned Christian, elaborated this point:

It is clear that we must base everything upon religion. There are, however, different religions. In our East, Confucianism is perfect for human ethics. For that reason, for some three thousand years it was the basis for moral codes, social discipline, governance of nations, and the pacification of the world. Ethics, however, change as times change... Furthermore, ethics

¹ Syngman Rhee was born during the last days of *Chosun* dynasty. Japan colonized Korea from 1910 to 1945. He was one of the first Korean students to be educated in the United States through a help of Protestant missionaries and worked in the States for Korea’s independence. After Korea became independent from Japan, Rhee became the first president of the Republic of Korea (Kim 2001).

address only things that are visible and do not discuss things in the afterlife...There is, nevertheless, the Heavenly Way...As our nation struggles to rise up from its fall and new buds try to sprout from decayed morass, unless we base ourselves on [Christianity], we may not reap true benefits...from our contacts with the [outside] world. (Kim, 2001:281-283).

Eager Protestant missionaries in 19th century helped Koreans to set up schools and hospitals. Education and modernization followed. Many of the future leaders of Korea were educated at these institutions. The missionary connections to the young in Korea instigated brought about the first immigration movement to the United States in early 1900s (Kim, 1986). Today current Korean immigrants, who are Christians, looked for their ties with Christian organizations when they arrive in America.

As with most of these post-1965 Korean immigrants, my grandmother was one of the early Korean Christians who also abided by Confucian rules. Raised a Methodist, my grandmother evangelized her entire family and raised her children as Methodists as well. I remember when she would drop me off at the children's Sunday school at the Joong-Ang Methodist Church in my hometown of Chun Cheon every Sunday. She used to bathe me carefully and dress me in my best outfit. After she got dressed in her best Sunday outfit, under her chic umbrella to block the sun, we walked to our church. However, she remained obedient to my grandfather and followed his directions.

My Christian training began even before I was aware of myself. When I reached adolescence; however, I began to be skeptical about people's motives behind attending churches and stopped going to church altogether. Then when I came to the United States a decade ago, a personal friend invited me to go to a church on Sundays. I accepted readily this time, I guess for the same reasons other immigrants did—to seek communal ties with other Koreans, and in 1995, I became a member of the Church.

My intermittent church experiences gave me time to reflect on the dyadic relationship between God and individuals. Before I decided to return to attending the Church, I had previously decided that religious life around a church ought to be strictly religious, not secular and personal. As I attended the Church, however, I found that the communal experiences gained at the Church meant more than just an individual's relationship with God. Individuals connected with God in the sanctuary during worship services. At the same time, I have witnessed that the members who also have found religious and cultural comfort while interacting with other Koreans at the Church.

During this research, at first it was hard to maintain objectivity while writing field notes since I possessed insider's knowledge of the language, customs, and culture. As I made progress with interviews and observation on interactions among the members, I realized how little I had known about Koreans as immigrants, transient students, and individuals trying to find their identity. I began to see the members not as friends and acquaintances who might have personal agendas but as minorities in the U.S. Deep South who were trying to develop their lives in a new country.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methods

The methods I used for this ethnographic research include interviews, informal conversations, and the participant-observation method. I used the participant observation method for the first few months into the research, focusing primarily on the observation. Because I had been an active member of the Church, I was a bit concerned that my previous opinion might create biases. I wanted to look at the Church activities and interaction among the members objectively with a researcher's eyes. However, as time went by, I realized that my previous involvement actually allowed me better understand my informants' accounts on their lives in Baton Rouge.

In addition to the methods listed above, I collected data from sermons, fellowships, and occasional events such as a Korean choir's performance, the New Year's Eve gathering, and revivals. I took notes on the pastor's sermons to see if there were any cultural codes in the sermon that only Korean would be able to understand. Reading the notes from the sermon revealed the pastor's Baptist ministry and the directions he wanted to take in the future. This is discussed further in detail in chapter 4.

The languages used for interviews were both in Korean and English.

To bring out the immediacy of the ethnography, I used the present tense for the chapter four, five, and six.

3.2 Informants

Before beginning the interviews, I had chose individuals to use as informants. Since I was focusing on familial structure of the members, I decided to select interviewees who represented different groups according to the generation and socio-economic statuses.

However, due to the Confucian cultural sensitivity that discouraged interaction between a married man and a single woman, I selected three females, as my interviewees since speaking to a husband of someone would be a faux pas in Korean context. So these three interviewees were Hyeok Choi, Grace Song, and So *Samonim*²(from here, I will use just *Samonim*). All of them consented to use their real names for the thesis. I used formal interviews with all three interviewees. Other informants included the elders and deacons. Because of their reluctance to reveal their personal views, interviews with the elders and deacons were not conducted. I gathered information from them during our conversations at the Church on Sundays while having lunch. I had to rely on observation of their interactions and conversations with other members. Since many of the elders left the Church in early period of the Church history (which will be discussed further in the next chapter) resulting from personal conflicts and theological differences, the elders were cautious not to reveal too much personal opinion. When I told one of the elders my intention of this research during an informal conversation, he was hesitant to give me a full consent to a follow up interview. I did not pursue the interview further but did ask several questions about the history of the Church and what the administrative titles meant.

To understand the significance of my three informants, I must describe the groups to which they belonged and represented. Hyeok was a wife of a doctoral student at Louisiana State University, a mother of a three-year-old boy, and a homemaker. She was a teacher before she came to the United States and was considered a professional. She belonged to the transient student (*yoohaaksaeng*) group, but her inability to speak English

² This pronoun refers to a wife of a man with an incumbency with titles such as a president, director, professor, etc. In the church setting, a wife of a minister is called *Samonim*. Normally the last name precedes this pronoun to indicate whose wife is referred to. For example, if the pastor's last name is Lee, then the wife is called *Lee Samonim*. In this research this name refers to the wife of the pastor of the Church.

discouraged her becoming involved with American culture. She felt inept and isolated in the U.S, so the Church offered her a place to feel connected with others.



Figure 2. Hyeok and her family

Korean students in Baton Rouge struggled financially since they were on limited budget. The students' statuses as aliens in the U.S. limited their economic activities, and many students depended on financial aid from the university or family support. The students expressed their guilty feelings for using family money to study when they were at the age to be economically independent. The guilt came from not being able to fulfill filial piety toward their parents that Confucian social code prescribed. Hyeok also expressed her economic hardship she felt at times. As with many other student wives, Hyeok (Figure 2) taught at the Korean Language School of Baton Rouge, tutored an elementary student the Korean language, and has sold *Kimchi*³ to supplement income.

³ *Kimchi* is a unique Korean dish that is basically pickled cabbage and radish. Many Koreans associate *Kimchi* with rice as a meal. “*Kimchi* [is] a fermented [nappa] cabbage seasoned with salt, garlic, pepper, ginger, green onions, and pickled fish. *Kimchi* originated in Korean during the early period of Three Kingdoms (37 B.C.-A.D. 7) as a method of preserving vegetables in salt in order to have them available for the off-season...There now are over 200 different kinds of kimchis” (Hurh 1998:25-26)

This economic relationship the students had with their family also mirrored the member-dynamics within the Church practice: the elder group took care of financial matters; the transient student group carried out more physical labors.

Grace (Figure 3.) was a 29-year-old second generation Korean American who immigrated with her family at the age of three. Grace's experience and observations were tremendous help in figuring out the member-dynamics. She was a graphic designer at an advertising firm and a graduate from LSU. She had no memory of Korea and did not possess full linguistic competency to share cultural knowledge with other Koreans of her age. However, Grace's accounts on her parents who also came to the U.S for betterment of their children's lives, described their experiences of the first generation Korean immigrants. She told me, "My parents used to tell me that they came to America for our education. As long as I got my college education, that was enough for them. They didn't have enough money to send me to a private school in the Northeast."



Figure 3. Grace (in the middle) and the youths

In addition, Grace's inability to fully participate in the Korean community convinced me that the Koreans at the Church utilized the common language and food to create a

distinctive cultural place. Koreans in the Church viewed Grace as an American because of her status as a professional female with full competency in the U.S. culture. Due to the fact that she is an English speaker, she led praise worship for children who spoke English. The children's worship was carried out in a physically separated room from the adults, so little interaction occurred between Korean adults and the children on Sundays.

Interviews with *Samonim* (Figure 4.) were a bit more stressful than with other informants due to the sensitivity of the subjects of the Church's role to the Korean community in relation to her position within the community.



Figure 4. *Samonim* (in the middle) and her cooking team

Her stance on the Church's function was purely on religion and ministry at first, but she did tell me that the pastor and she have been involved with helping out illegal immigrants, economically destitute, and psychologically disturbed Koreans, who need someone to talk to right away. Even cooking on Sundays meant evangelism for her. "Having lunch at the Church on Sundays first and foremost is for Christian fellowship.

We would never have time to see and share fellowship with one another if we don't eat together on Sundays.”

As I proceeded with my fieldwork, I realized that gender was very much intertwined in every aspect of the Church community. Both Baptist traditions and Confucian values focus on women's role as supporters and subordinates. I wanted to see how Biblical teachings and Confucian culture played into roles of student wives in the U.S. as homemakers with limited access to the outside world beyond the physical boundaries of their apartment complex. Hyeok told me how she struggled with loneliness and insecurity that came from staying at home and with the feeling of not being able to accomplish anything. However, as a woman and a mother, she provided stability of a home for her husband to come to after a hard day of study; she has enabled him to go out and concentrate on academic life. She also provided valuable opportunity for fellowship among the Church members through cooking meals that reinforced evangelical purpose of creating a spiritual community.

Another aspect of the member-dynamics involved the male-female interaction among the members of the Church, which was different from typical American male-female interactions. Grace told me that she noticed differences in male and female greeting practices. She said, “I've noticed that men in the Church just nod to me rather than bow, and women usually were more openly greeting to me than men are. Also, Korean guys told me to speak Korean and be more like Korean.” She accounted for the difference in greeting behavior as the result of Korean men feeling superior to her. Due to her gender and relatively younger age, men perhaps felt that paying Grace a respectful bow was not

necessary. In the form of greeting practices, Koreans exhibited Confucian cultural behavior even toward Korean-American female.

Age also played an important role in the Church practice and interpersonal relationships among the members. Seniority in age was a condition for assuming leadership roles in the Church. The separation between active and non-active Church members (measured in terms of physical involvement with the Church activities) was determined according to their age. This dividing point in age was around the pastor's age: mid forties. Anyone younger than him would assume more physical activities; the elders held more responsible titles, such as deacons and presidents of a committee. The Korean cultural rule of listening to the elders was expressed in the Church practice as well. Confucian order of the older giving instructions to the younger was carried out in every aspect of the Church activities. The younger generation assumed active roles in carrying out details of the church activities such as cooking, cleaning, teaching, playing instruments, and/or playing fellowship sports games. The elders met and planned for those activities. Although Confucian cultural elements were exhibited throughout social interactions, these social events and settings were within the boundaries of Christian traditions.

3.3 Fieldwork and Difficulties

Transcribing and translating the interviews from Korean to English turned out to be more difficult than I had expected. Korean language structure relied on verb endings to indicate the speaker, while the grammatical subject of a sentence was often invisible. When I asked Hyeok if cooking on Sundays was not too much trouble, she said “불만은없어: complaint not here” The phrase may sound like the subject was

“complaint,” but actual subject was “I” and “complaint,” the object in this sentence.

What she meant was she didn’t have any complaints. Also abstract explanations, rather than vivid description of feelings and thoughts, dominated. When Hyeok was describing the loneliness and depression she experienced as a student-wife, she generalized the experience by using vague terms such as “*yoohaaksaeng*” instead of “I”, “Koreans” rather than a specific individual’s name, and “America” rather than “Baton Rouge”.

I needed to make inferences from her generalized description of her life in an attempt to portray her life as a *yoohaaksaeng* wife. When I asked her to describe her opinions on Koreans within our Church, she told me “Koreans in America are old-fashioned. Their clothes are outdated and hair styles are also very conservative.” As her statement showed, she did not refer to any specific member to describe the tendency. While transcribing, I could not include gestures, tone, intonations, accents, and other contextual factors such as Hyeok’s son pulling her hair during the interview. It was a daunting task to translate what I initially thought natural but became unnatural when trying to present it in a different language. Language truly is heavily coded representation of our cognition.

Difficulties I encountered with the translation were not related to grammatical technicalities, but rather obstacles with representing culturally encoded symbols in other sets of symbols. As Sapir argued decades ago, a language was spoken within a cultural setting (1921:207). As the “practices and beliefs that [determined]” the way of thinking of Koreans were different from those of the U.S., translation became a matter of not only switching words spoken into another language, but also translating culture so that the translated words would make sense in English.

My other obstacle while conducting this research was lack of time I had on my hands. The entire time I was in the Anthropology master's program, I have been also working full time. Fortunately I worked for LSU, so I did not have to lose too much time on commuting, but inability to carry out research during the day dragged research time and prohibited me from conducting interviews with the student wives and the pastor's wife who have more time during the day. However, I tried my best to tell the story in their own words, and I trust the excellent faculty members who have guided me through the program.

This research was truly a growing opportunity for me as a person, student, and researcher. I experienced the lonesome, crying days in solitude when no one could understand my side of the story, when I could not tell my informants whether I agreed or opposed to their opinions on the Church practice in fear of altering their views, and when I knew that the end of this project was going to be also the end of our relationship. I have learned what a brave group of people I have worked with. The more I learned about cultural influence on individuals, the more I gained respect for these immigrants who came across the ocean to make this lonely place on the map a home.

CHAPTER 4. THE KOREAN BAPTIST CHURCH OF BATON ROUGE

4.1 Overview

The Korean Baptist Church of Baton Rouge was established in April 1982 as a subsidiary church of the Parkview Baptist Church of Baton Rouge. A handful of first generation Koreans and their families, who wanted to worship and have services in Korean, established the Church. Some of these families included inter-marriage couples with children. Before the Church was established, these Korean families met in members' homes to have services and fellowship. The Korean Baptist Church of Baton Rouge officially opened its door to offer worship services to ethnic Koreans and their families.

Around 1992, division among the members eventually led to creating two churches in the city. According to my informants, the members who had disagreement with the pastor at the time left the church and created a non-denominational church on Lee Drive. According to Grace, the group of people who left at the time was mostly Baton Rouge residents who had established their lives in the city, whereas the people who stayed were the people who had recently moved into the city, including the pastor who was a student at the New Orleans Baptist Seminary. Grace's family was also newcomers into the town. They had moved from Wisconsin in 1991, and some of other elders were from Chicago, Wisconsin, and other U.S cities. So from the very beginning, the Church served to "newcomers" into the town rather than to the "locals". My initial impression of the Church's split seemed to be based on ideological differences between Baptists and some of other Protestants. However, after speaking with the informants, I made an inference that the reason for the split was as much due to the denominational differences as the

demographic differences. The Church's denomination remained Southern Baptist, whereas the new church was non-denominational; the Church had ninety nine percent ethnic Korean members, whereas the new church has many inter-marriage couples with children.

The physical location of the Church relates closely to the makeup of the attendees. The Church is located one mile away from LSU campus, in a quiet residential area near historical Highland Road. The number of the Church attendees have fluctuated according to the university's academic calendars because the number of students coming to earn a degree or to be post doctoral researchers on annual contracts with LSU changes each semester. Once the students earned their degrees or the researchers completed their contracts, these transient Koreans return to Korea or find a position in another state and move out of the Baton Rouge area. The pastor has aspired to begin campus ministry on the LSU campus, but lack of trained ministers makes this task difficult.



Figure 5 Aerial photo of 264 Burgin Avenue

Since the Church opened, pastors have come and gone. Finally in 1996, Pastor Jae Hoon So took the position as the head pastor and began his ministry. At that time, the pastor was attending the New Orleans Baptist Seminary as a student, and he had received a master's of Divinity degree from DaeJun Baptist Seminary in Korea before he came to the United States. So far, the Church has ordained two new pastors, both of who have moved away to minister at other churches. Currently, the Church has two youth pastors. The current motto of the Church is: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19-20). Earlier evangelism was not a dominant activity of the Church, but recently active Bible study sessions concentrate on the "teaching" of the members so that they can go out and evangelize others. However, these efforts to evangelize non-church attendees have not harvested much fruit. Initiated by the pastor, these Bible study sessions sometimes are viewed as "extra" things to do, and since the Church has served as a place for Koreans to adjust to the new environment, evangelizing others has become a secondary or even a distant objective for the congregation.

4.2 Who Is the Church for?

The Church from its very beginning has offered ethnic Koreans a place to worship and serve God in Korean language. Except for children, Korean is the common language shared among members. Only when an English-speaking guest is present, is English spoken but only to the guests who wear earphones. Only two Caucasians, who are

married to Korean women, attend the Church, and their attendance is sporadic. I think the use of Korean language make them feel isolated in the Church.

The Church's most recent directory, published in January 2003, lists 41 families, and 13 singles members. Among these 41 households listed, only one divorced female member is listed as the head of her household. Despite the fact she lives alone, she is listed under the family section because she was married once and did not fall into the age group of the young adult group. Most of the elders of the Church are the first generation, post-1965 immigrants, and the younger attendees are students and researchers at LSU. Only one, second generation Korean-American, Grace Song, attended the Church. Grace explained she came to the Church because at the time, there was no church in Baton Rouge area that catered to the second generation Korean Americans. She said "I rather feel a half-way strange in a Korean church than totally strange in an American church." Although she voluntarily attends the Church, she does not attend the regular worship services in the sanctuary with other Korean adults. As described in the previous chapter, she is involved with the children's ministry, where the language used in English and where the children are also second generation Koreans.

4.2.1 Membership Defined

By definition according to the pastor, a "member" of the Church is someone who received water Baptism and earned approval of the congregation as a member. If a newcomer attends the Church for a month or so, and the newcomer was baptized, he/she can join the Church according to the Baptist tradition. The pastor asks for the congregation's approval to admit him/her as a member. If the newcomer has not been

baptized according to the Baptist tradition, then the newcomer must be baptized before becoming a member.

Anyone who assumes a major role in the Church must be a baptized member. The pastor makes it clear to the congregation, when discussing nomination for new workers that only “baptized” members have a right to hold a position. Since the Bible said “baptism” is to be done in the water, other practices such as sprinkling water on one’s head is not recognized as true “baptism” in Baptist churches. This practice would prohibit attendees with Methodist or Presbyterian backgrounds from participating actively. However, since the Church had shortage of volunteers, this law is not heavily enforced if the new comer is perceived as a good Christian. For example, when one of the young adult members got married and brought his wife from Korea, the wife joined the choir immediately and became actively involved in the Church functions. She was a Presbyterian who was not baptized according to the Baptist tradition, but because she was viewed as pious Christian, she was not urged to be baptized. Also the Church’s fluctuating membership hinders enforcement of the water Baptism requirement.

Despite the Church’s definition of a member, I use the term “member” for those who are listed on the directory. The reason is because of the inaccuracy of the member registry due to high turn over of the Church attendants.

4.3 Classification of Members

I have classified the members of the Korean Baptist Church of Baton Rouge into two major groups: the temporary group and the resident group. I assigned arbitrary names for my research purposes. These groups are the cohort groups in the Church that enables the continuity of the Korean culture.

4.3.1 Temporary Group

The temporary group belongs mainly to students called *yoohaaksaeng*, meaning students abroad, and researchers who come to Baton Rouge on temporary contracts. This group is regarded as people who will soon vacate their seats and will be replaced by the newly incoming students in the future semesters. There are eight *yoohaaksaeng* families and twelve single *yoohaaksaengs* listed in the directory as of January 2004. Age distribution of this group is from early twenties to mid- or late thirties, and some of them are recently married or have young children.

Many of these married students struggle with learning English and are on financial constraints. Some receive financial support from their families in Korea, but many depend on graduate assistantships as their sources of income. The wives help out financially by finding part time jobs at Korean-owned stores for cash, volunteering as a tutor, teaching at the community language school, or just trying to save as much as possible. Many wives feel frustrated because their life style in Korea had been much higher than that of Baton Rouge. Community life is very important to these wives because this network meant a source of information and comfort. If the husbands suffer from lack of command in English and hardship in adjusting to academic culture in the United States, the wives suffer from loneliness and feeling of inadequacy. Since the wives also are highly educated and worked as professionals in Korea, being housewives in a foreign country leave them with feelings of entrapment and frustration.

My informant, Hyeok, told me that, “Before I had my faith, I used to feel depressed and lonely. I felt useless being at home. I had a grand dream of learning English and speaking it fluently and live a professional life in the U.S. But once I got here, I had to

support my husband and we didn't have enough for both of us to go to school. And I have a baby to take care of." She also added that she knew some wives who had to go back to Korea from depression.

But when wives come to the Church and find other wives who shared the same experiences and emotions, these wives comfort each other while meeting at small Bible study sessions that are designed just for the student wives. These sessions focus on the wives' roles as supporters, not the supported. Since they share similarities as *yoohaaksaeng* wives, they also share information on how to get through everyday without feeling lonely or inadequate. They also discuss trends in Korea, exchange videotapes of Korean soap opera, TV shows, and movies that are newly released in Korea. So these students and wives are aware of what is going on in Korean pop culture. Internet also enables them be connected with Korea and its current events. Email system reinforces the use of Korean language on daily basis. So when they got together at the Church, the transient group shares the newest information they have acquired about Korean society.

The single members also struggle with English and academic work. In addition, these singles have burden of taking care of housework such as cooking cleaning, and washing cloths. Although they are in the same age group as married students, the single members are not considered as "adults," and they are viewed as people to be cared for in the Church. The singles are exempt from assuming major duties, but they are expected to help out with trivial activities such as cleaning rooms, moving tables and chairs, or setting equipments up for events.

One of the favorite phrases the elders use is “the young people should do it,” meaning that any duties involving physical activities or in the spotlights should be young people’s business. Even in the choir, when a conductor asks for a volunteer to sing a solo, one of the elder choir members said, “The young people should do it.” This attitude is common throughout the Church. The elders like to be spectators and benefactors for the younger members’ performances. The “young people” the elders speak of are the transient group. The transient group, then, is considered as young, active children who should carry out the most physically demanding work in the Church, as would the children of a Korean family. As the Confucian code prescribed, married couples are considered as adults, whereas singles are not. This attitude leads to assigning more important duties to married transient group members than to the singles. This division of work within the Church will be discussed more in detail in the following chapters.

4.3.2 Resident Group

The second group--the resident group-- is made up of the post 1965 immigrants who moved to the United States for political or economic reasons (Nahm, 1988). Livelihoods for this group included small businesses such as beauty supplies for African Americans, flea market stores, clothing stores, sandwich and donut shops; teachers/professors, nurses, researchers, and retired professionals. Then the resident group is also categorized into two groups: professionals and non-professionals. Here I define professional residents as professors, researchers, educators, and medical professionals; and non-professionals as those who own or worked for small businesses. The distinguishing factor between the two groups is the use of English. The professional residents are relatively more fluent in English and aware of the American culture; the non-professional group is not as fluent in

English and leads isolated lives from the mainstream American culture. For this reason, the professional resident group is more involved with legal and financial matters of the Church. The latter group is more involved with building maintenance, cooking, and general house keeping. The age distribution of this group is from forties to seventies. The resident group is considered permanent members and major contributors to the Church's finance.

Because the resident group is considered the elders, they influence decision-makings on Church administration. Many of them hold a title of deacon, and they are consulted on activities such as a loan, missionary support, and Sunday school activities. The permanent group also financially and physically contributes to the Summer Vacation Bible School, retreats, Sunday school activities, revival services, and other activities as well as to the offering on Sundays.

The Church's activities occupy most of social events for the resident group. Grace's parents also belong to the non-professional resident group, and they spend, "Ninety percent of their time at the Church. They love going to church and getting involved with the Church people." When I asked if they considered the Church members as if they were a part of the family, she said, "yes, indeed, like a family." For the resident group, the Church is a gateway to socializing with other Koreans. Even if some of their current friends are not the Church members, they began their personal relationship through the Church.

Those who do not have a faith leave the Church. These ex-members discontinue attending Sunday services because of the pressure to be Christians. I have heard from the elders and those who left the Church that they did not have a faith in Jesus as their saviors,

and the Church's request to be religious in their daily lives became unbearable. The elders think that the reason for these non-believers' leaving the Church is personal conflicts with the pastor. But underlying implication I found suggested that non-believers wanted to attend the Church for social purposes rather than for religious reasons. The pastor clearly wants to evangelize the non-believers, but the members wanted a social space to share Korean culture. The elders regret the Church's inability to make them feel welcomed. The Church's function is to be a place within which Christianity is fostered among ethnic Koreans, and where that function is made somehow it leads to exclusion of non-Christian Koreans.

The resident group also helps out newly arrived Koreans with setting up businesses, finding schools for the children, and other issues dealing with adjusting to the city. For example, when a new couple comes into town to open a flea market store, the residents pitch in and find a location for the store, and establish ties with suppliers. Donut business is another strong Korean-owned business in town. Often Koreans with no qualification for professional jobs in corporations or lack linguistic competency to find a job open up a donut shop. Consequently Mary Lee Donuts in Baton Rouge is one of the most Korean owned businesses. Beauty Supplies is another major Korean owned business.

These immigrants rely on each other as consultants, supporters, and friends who will help each other out at times of difficulties. Unable to find out business know-how to small matters of how to find a school for the children, the newly arrived Koreans rely on the residents group for the information. Instead of seeking Americans for solutions to their problems, Koreans find help from other Koreans and they slowly adjust their lives in the city.

As I have discussed previously, Grace is the only second generation-Korean among the adult members. Originally there were about a dozen second generation Koreans, but they moved away from Louisiana after graduating from High School to attend private schools in Northeast coast or chose not to attend the Church. Grace told me that when she came to Baton Rouge, there were “about ten or eleven second-generation Koreans in the youth group.” Grace also debated on attending the Church. She said that she had to readjust to the Korean culture. She had attended churches for the second-generation Korean- Americans where the service was in English. From her stories, I found out that, the second-generation Korean-Americans focused especially on their spiritual growth and their devotion to God when considering a church to attend.

4.3.3 The Church Member Dynamics

As I mentioned earlier, Korean culture puts heavy emphasis on family values, and interpersonal relationships among the Church members also resemble the Confucian family relationship. The resident group acts as parents, and the temporary group members fill the place the children left. Many of the resident group members feel somewhat estranged from their own children, since most of them do not speak Korean or possess Korean cultural competency. Most of the second-generation Koreans identify themselves as Americans in distinction from their parents, who still view themselves as Korean, regardless of their legal status as the U.S. citizen. When the resident group hosts dinner parties for members of the temporary groups, but the biological children of these residents, the second generation Korean Americans, are absent. Most of them are away from home, but even when they are in town for the holidays, they do not attend social gatherings at the Church. Evidently, unable to connect to their children, the resident

group seeks their familial relationships with the temporary members. Sunday services and weekend Bible study sessions serve as vehicle for the resident group to act as the elders of a family in the Church. The temporary group members are separated from sources of support and welcome the care and attention the resident group pays.

4.4 Physical Layout of the Church

The building layout of the Church separates between a sacred space and a social space. Divided into four sections, the Church lay out creates places for the rituals, social activities, and for the children.

The entrance to the sanctuary is directly on the right side of the main entrance to the building. The door to the sanctuary faces the back of the wooden pews. There are three columns of the pews in a fan shape. At the frontal center of this fan-shaped pew is the pulpit on a platform where the pastor gives sermons each Sunday. Behind the pulpit, two rows of long benches serve as the choir seats. Behind these benches is the baptistery. The baptistery is not visible since it is situated behind a small wall behind the choir benches. Behind the baptistery, a large, seven-foot tall, wooden cross hangs. As with all crosses found in Protestant churches in contrast to Catholics, the cross is empty, signifying Jesus' resurrection from death. The cross symbolizes Jesus' "Suffering on the Cross," bleeding his life to cleanse the member's sins, and his love for the human kind. The members are then reminded of the savior's indiscriminating sacrifice for ethnic Koreans and of the responsibility of Christians to worship Him.

The communion table is in front of the pulpit and bore the following inscription: "Do This in Remembrance of Me." In spite of its original purpose to share bread and wine, the table holds a flower arrangement and two collection baskets. The communion table is

used for the communion and hold bread and wine (which is grape juice really) only once during the year. A week before the Easter, as Jesus had shared his Last Supper with his disciples, the congregation shares bread and wine in remembrance of God's grace and love toward His children.



Figure 6 The Sanctuary⁴

The overall impression of the sanctuary is one of solemnity. Dark brown wall panels and high ceiling subdue emotions. The congregation keeps silence during services, and turning heads and silent gaze of the members check any noise. The Church does not have a separate room where moms with infants can engage in the service without disturbing the worship. So the pastor asks the congregation to reserve the back rows of the nearest pews to the entrance door for members with infants. Naturally the babies make noises at times, and when they do, the moms leave the sanctuary with the babies so as not to disturb the solemnity of the service. I observed that this tendency to keep silence

⁴ The flower basket and collection baskets occupied the communion table. The communion table bore an inscription "Do this in remembrance of me."

resembled solemn Confucian rituals for ancestors. Also, the Confucian social code prohibits educated, upper class *Yangban*⁵s from yelling, speaking loudly, expressing emotions too freely in public. Naturally, the members who are raised in Confucian culture are reluctant to respond loudly to the pastor's sermon. Unlike many Southern Baptist churches, the Church members keep silence during the service.

Outside of the sanctuary is a hallway with the Church bulletin board on the opposite wall from the sanctuary. The Church bulletin board holds sign-up sheets to contribute for flower donations, a dish for feasts, letters from the Church-sponsored missionary family and former members, and notices of upcoming conventions. The end of this hallway turns to the left and led to a corridor with doors on both sides. To the right of this corridor is a recording room where the sermons are tape-recorded, and a place for a translator to transmit translation of the sermon for non-Korean speakers. This room also stores choir gowns, a small refrigerator, and a dead organ.

On the opposite side of the recording room is the pastor's office with bookcases filled with Christian related books and Korean literature. In this office, the pastor holds counseling sessions, answered phone calls, and prepared his sermons before services.

The Church office is located next to the pastor's office. In the office, a mailbox for each administrative unit, a computer, a printer, a copy machine, a desk and a bookcase that held sheet music for the choir are stored.

On the opposite side of the office is a door that leads to playground. The children occupy the playground and except for a few parents with young children, and most of adult members do not use the playground.

⁵ Ruling class of *Chosun* dynasty. *Yangbans* were upper class people who held positions in the imperial court. *Yangban* class best represents the Confucian influence in that they were selected through the national exams prescribed from Confucian texts.

Next to the office is the kitchen with an opening that faces the fellowship hall. The fellowship hall is an open space with ten dining tables set up side-by-side, creating three columns.

To the right side of the fellowship hall are the Sunday school classrooms for children and a nursery where mothers and infants stay during the worship. The nursery has one crib, a plastic miniature slide, a supply closet, and a small bookcase on the wall. This room has a speaker that transmits the sermon; however, most of the times, the volume is turned off and the mothers cannot concentrate on the message since they are busy with attending babies. My friends told me that it is hard to listen to the sermon in the nursery because sometimes if a baby is sleeping, they have to turn the speaker off, and at other times, the babies are playing loudly, so they cannot listen to the sermon. So these moms attend the service in the sanctuary risking the fact that they will have to leave the sanctuary when the babies cried.

The next room to the baby's room is the kindergarteners' room. This room has a low table and small chairs for toddlers. The teachers display the art works on the wall each week to show the parents what the kids have learned that day. The room is full of scratch marks, stains, and loose paper on the floor. The next room is the youth room where they had Bible study sessions after the service. This room also serves as a meeting room for adults.

The next room, which is the last room around the fellowship hall, is the Sunday school room where the children's service is held. This room is also used as the choir practice room on Sunday mornings. Since the room has a piano, the practice before the service is carried out in this room. The size of the room is small compared to the

sanctuary, where the adults have their worship service. A white washed podium with scratches, serves as the pulpit and folding chairs are lined up toward the podium. The walls bear some of the posters from the last year's Vacation Bible School. Bookcases and cabinets for the Korean Language School lean against the back wall. Since the school is held on Saturdays, odd pens and pencils, torn paper pieces, and nick-knacks that students left remain on shelves and the top of the filing cabinets. Another bookcase in a corner holds bible study materials, hymnbooks, a few English bibles, and sheet music that the choir leaves behind.

As described thus far, places for worship and social activities are divided. The sanctuary is a place for solemn rituals, the corridor with rooms on the side is a buffer zone for the mundane work, and the fellowship hall is where the sharing occurs. As described, the rooms for the children are not well kept and do not follow the same formality of the adults' worship space. Even the Sunday school worship room is disorganized and not well maintained. Many teachers have complained about the lack of attention paid to the Sunday school, and I suspect that the use of English and displacement of children in Korean culture lead to this inattention to needs of children.

4.5 The Church Units

The Church life involves many aspects in addition to a religious one. The nature of the Church is as much tangible as it is intangible in that these Koreans congregate in a physical building, which demands maintenance, business transactions, and other daily activities resembling those of a household. As with all communities, the Church also requires division of responsibilities. To carry out religious rituals, the members assume roles to execute the worship; to share meals and other social activities, the members need

to divide labor. While examining the functions each member carries out, I noticed two different types of units the Church had: ministry units and administrative units. The ministry units are responsible for maintaining religious aspect of the Church life whereas the administrative units carry out more secular aspects.

4.5.1 Ministry Units

The ministry units take care of the spiritual aspects of the Church community. Since the Church's primary function is to serve God, the ministry units carry out religious tasks that influence Koreans spiritually.

The official affiliations of the Church include: the Southern Baptist convention, Louisiana State Baptist Convention, and Judson Baptist Convention of East Baton Rouge parish. On an unofficial level, Pastor So is a member of the Korean Baptist Ministers convention. This convention for Korean ministers, which is not recognized as a part of the Southern Baptist Convention, holds annual meetings in major U.S cities, and the pastor announces his attendance to the congregation.

Like Pastor So, almost all of the pastors/youth pastors who served the Church in the past have been graduates of the DaeJun Baptist Seminary, the biggest Baptist seminary in Korea. Many of them are acquaintances through their affiliation to the seminary, and their ministry at the Church strengthens their ties. Pastor So is responsible for delivering sermons, educating the cell group members, caring for the community member, and visiting non-Christians in the Korean community. One of the two youth pastors oversees the children's ministry and the other is responsible for the young adult group ministry. Although the Church does not have an official assistant pastor, one of the youth pastors is hired to support the pastor with his ministry.

Other ministry units include: Assembly of Congregation, Assembly of Deacons, Men's Missionary Association, Women's Missionary Association, Ministry of Music, and Sunday school. These units oversee religious functions of the Church, but they are not quite independent from administrative units since the members held titles in both units. Most of the presiding leaders of these units are the first generation, post-1965 immigrants whom I have identified as the residents.

According to the Southern Baptist tradition that firmly states the rights of individual members of the congregation, the Assembly of Congregation (whose presidents were elected at an Assembly meeting) as a whole casts votes for each of the Church businesses. Especially during January, names for volunteers and nominees for the Church offices are drawn, and the Assembly of Congregation votes to finalize the nominations at a congregational meeting. As discussed previously, only the "members" according to the Church definition are allowed to attend these meetings.

The last Assembly of Congregation meeting held in February was to determine whether to hire one of the youth pastors as an assistant minister. I did not attend the meeting, but during a conversation with the youth pastor, I found out some members opposed to the idea of having an assistant pastor since the Church was too small to afford another pastor. The youth pastor said, "Well, you weren't there, were you? It was not pretty...So many oppositions...made me feel so uncomfortable to be in there since it was about me." However, when the decision was made, everyone agreed to have the youth pastor as an assistant minister and was in good terms with him afterwards. These congregational meetings at times become an arena for contention. Some who hold grudges against other deacons or members voice their opposing opinions, and sometimes

the oppositions are personal in nature, that lead to personal conflicts among the members.

I have witnessed that some of these differences in opinions on how to run the Church business lead to a prolonged absence of some members. But these members eventually return to the Church and resolve their conflicts.

The next important ministry unit is the Assembly of Deacons. The Church has seven acting deacons who serve on the Assembly, and the president of the Assembly oversees the overall ministry matters and presides over fellowship prayer sessions at the end of the worship service. The title of *jibsa*, deacon is always used with their last names as a sign of respect for the title. As with *samonims*, a word “*jibsa-nim*”⁶ is added to their last names. For example, a deacon with the last name Kim is called, Kim *jibsa-nim*. Here speech practice among the members follows Korean tradition of using titles with names.



Figure 7 A council meeting

⁶ The use of suffix, “-nim” in Korean is common to indicate the respectability of the person. It comes from the hierarchal social classification of old Korea, when the upper ruling class were referred to as -nim. This tradition is still predominantly used in Korean culture.

Both Men and Women's Missionary Associations also have presidents and treasurers who keep records of expenses and collected dues from the members. The members of these associations are married men and women of mid-thirties and plus in ages. The Women's Missionary Association's primary function is to take care of the fellowship. Through the fellowship, the members can strengthen their spiritual ties within the Church community. The Men's' Missionary Association's primary function is to maintain the community ties through hosting a crawfish boil or a sports tournament. These activities are not directly involved with evangelism, but these activities allow members to interact with each other in settings that are different from rigid rituals. The members of the two associations also members of other administrative units, and the ministry work of these associations naturally spill over into the work of administrative units.

The Confucian tradition dictates that people reach adulthood when they are married, and no matter how old a person is, and if s/he is a single, s/he is not an adult. As *Samonim* told me during our interview, "the singles are people who need to be taken care of rather than actively taking care of others." A single female is not asked to cook or bring a dish, and a single male is not in charge of fixing a broken facility. When I asked the president of the Women's Missionary Association to tell me what I could bring for meals, she told me "Get married and join the missionary." Another lady who is also a good friend of mine told me, "Hurry up and get married already. I can't ask you to help out in the kitchen."⁷ The singles are allowed to assist the "adult" members with chores, but they are not required to carry out any primary responsibilities.

⁷ This attitude discouraged me from actively participating in cooking for the Sunday meal, so I had to rely heavily on the interviews and observations to describe preparation and cooking of the meal that are discussed in chapter five

When one is married, the social status of the married changes and the unmarried singles are treated as someone not quite “grown-up.” This change of status of Korean women indicates Confucian culture in that their status changes according to the status of their husbands: “a Korean woman must remain flexible and adaptable because her direction in life will depend largely upon the man with who she will become identified” (Song and Moon 1998:141).

When a woman marries a man three or four years older than her, she is allowed to address anyone of the husband’s age as equal and unmarried men younger than her husband has to call her as *hyungsoo*, “wife of an older brother.” This dynamic discourages unmarried singles in their mid-thirties to avoid interactions with others in the Church, and many unmarried single male members stop attending the Church services. So it is not surprising to see the decreased attendance rate of single students over the years. Because many of the Church activities focus on family life in Christ, the single students in early twenties feel out of place, and other older single students in late twenties or thirties feel embarrassed about their single status.

It is not uncommon for a member to be involved in more than one unit. There are numerous titles to fill, and conflicts among members occur when one person carries multiple responsibilities, and people often quickly feel burned out. For example, five of the choir members serve on the praise team, and all of the choir members are also members of the Men and Women’s Missionary Associations. Overlapping responsibilities these individual members assume, however, is not viewed as unnatural for many pious, willing believers. Especially women in the Church assume a lot more

multi-task duties than men. As will be discussed further in chapter seven, men's responsibilities are not as physically demanding and repetitious as those of women's.

As with many of Korean cultural aspects, the ministry units are also gender-divided. The pastor, youth pastors, and the president of Assembly of Deacons are all men, and female deacons and the president of the Women's Missionary Assembly support decisions made by these men. Following Confucian patriarchal tradition and enforced by the Baptist tradition of male leadership, the Church's ministry units exhibit strong gender divided patterns. In addition, the elder-younger relationship patterns are observed in interactions. The resident group occupies the roles of spiritual, whereas the younger, transients group execute the plans drawn up by the elders.

4.5.2 Administrative Units

The Administrative units of the Church include: Building and Equipment Maintenance Committee, Mission Committee, History and Broadcasting Committee, Finance Committee, and Worship Committee. These administrative committees are responsible for the business aspect of the Church.

The Building and Equipment committee keeps up with maintenance, plans for new additions and equipment, and paves a new parking lot. This committee has eight members, who are also members of the Men's Missionary Association, and assumes the role of the "men" of a household. As the husbands or fathers take care of the maintenance of a household, the committee meets and discusses what to do with building fixtures, air conditioning and heating units, and many other hardware related work. The most recent work this committee accomplished was paving a concrete parking lot for the Church. Since the new parking lot has been paved, neighborhood associations began to

contact the Church to rent the Church for their social activities. This was the first community outreach the Church offered to non-Korean neighbors.

The Mission committee oversees transactions involved with supporting a Korean missionary family in Costa Rica, sending young adults to retreats, and making future mission plans. This committee has five new members elected in January 2004, and the committee also sets up a budget and plans for the overall missionary work.



Figure 8 The Mission committee

The History and Broadcasting committee is responsible for recording sermons, maintaining electrical devices used during the worship, and keeping archives of the recorded materials. One of the committee members records the sermon each Sunday and distributes tapes to Sunday school teachers who are unable to attend the worship service for adults. Also, audiotapes from revivals, retreats, or conventions are recorded and sold for a small amount to cover the cost of tapes. Designated offerings and a budget for this committee covers most of the cost for the Sunday sermon recordings, but when extra recordings are made, the committee asks for a donation. This committee sets up an

overhead projector, connected to a computer used for various purposes, in the sanctuary. This committee has seven, male members. Since the committees' work involve technical knowledge on how to operate computers, electronic devices, and record keepings, male members are selected for the committee. Traditionally, electrical work is viewed as “men’s” work, so women are not part of this committee.



Figure 9 The History and Broadcasting Committee members

The Worship committee oversees the sanctuary decorations, such as flowers and holiday decorations, and the worship service preparations. This committee has nine members, and eight of them are women. The only male member is responsible for overseeing the equipment setup for the worship, which is not concerned with the aesthetics. One of the subsidiary committee of the Worship committee is the Flower committee that is responsible for flower arrangement, landscaping around the Church, and decorating during Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas holidays. Keeping up with the aesthetics of the Church is regarded as women’s responsibilities. As Hyeok told me

once, “the division of responsibilities and work in the Church is kind of like being a family... as if families divide up the work.” It was clear that the traditional concept of gendered work between men and women in a family transposed onto the work of these units.

The last committee discussed here is the Finance committee, also an all-male-member committee, and has a little more structure than the rest of the administrative units. This committee has a secretary, a treasurer, accountants, auditors, and a board of directors. The board of directors mostly is composed of deacons, major contributors to the Church’s finance. Again, the role of men in the Church assumes the more important and delicate matters.

4.6 Cell Groups and Fellowship

Another important ministry unit that deserved a separate mention is the weekend Bible study cell groups called *gooyuk*. Although the Church belongs to the Southern Baptist convention and follows many of the Baptist tradition prescribed by the convention, in carrying out religious activities, one of the practices that stand out as non-Baptist is these cell group meetings which are weekend Bible study sessions churches in Korea commonly practice. The cell group in Korean is called *gooyuk*, and its literal translation means a ‘district.’ The Bible study meetings are called *gooyukyeabae* meaning ‘district worship.’ I remember the times when my grandmother hosted these *gooyukyeabae* at our home when I was little. As I mentioned earlier, my grandmother was a Methodist, and her church also practiced these weekend Bible studies.

Normally the *gooyuk* members are assigned according to their geographical proximity. But the groups of the Church are arranged according to the similarities of social status of

the members. These *gooyuk* are rearranged as needed. As of January 2004, the Church has six *gooyuk*. The single group is not considered a part of the cell group organization, and it will be discussed separately.

When I first began my fieldwork, the names of the *gooyuk* had been Biblical names that each group aspired to become in their lives. After January, newly arranged *gooyuk* names changed to: Faith, Love, Grace, Hope, Kindness, and Vision, representing the Church's ministry goal of striving to instill gospel among the members.

Each *gooyuk* has a Bible teacher, and a deacon's family. "Faith" has six married student families with a deacon's family. "Love" has six families who live relatively far away from the Church, and "Grace" has seven first generation immigrant families. "Hope" consists of post-doctoral families and a deacon's family, and "Kindness" has relatively younger permanent resident families. The last of the cell groups, "Vision" includes families that used to be members but no longer attend the Church and families that moved away to different cities. The makeup of this last cell group hints at the past disagreements and conflicts that I have mentioned earlier. Although the members of the last group do not attend the Church, the directory continues to list their names.

The leaders of these *gooyuk* are normally deacons or elderly members, and the Bible study teachers are members with reputations for their piety and knowledge of the Bible. The cell leaders organize activities, and the teachers focus on Bible studies. The teachers meet with the pastor one day prior to *gooyukyeabae* and receive instructions for the Bible study. These weekend meetings also include fellowship. According to Hyeok, until recently, they had dinner together before the Bible study that lasted until close to midnight. She did not overtly comment on the financial and physical strains that come

from preparing the meals; however, I suspect that the financial consideration was a part of reason for eliminating dinners at these meetings. The new arrangement is that the cell group meetings to begin with Bible study first and then followed by fellowship time with refreshments.

The cell group meetings offer the members opportunities to further their learning about Bible that the sermons cannot adequately cover. These Bible study sessions encourage the members to discuss, share, and receive spiritual, social, and psychological support. My informant Hyeok's view on this matter:

These meetings are very healthy. When I meet with non-church goers (meaning non-believers), I thought it was wasting time and energy consuming. I felt nothing was beneficial...But the meetings with the believers are not like that. After these pleasant and joyful meetings... That is the biggest different. I feel no regrets after [cell group] meetings...the cell meetings reinforce it to a deeper degree. During the sermon, you don't hear it more in detail, you know? I just pray and listen and re-think (ruminate) about the words, that's it. At the cell group meetings, because I study more in detail about why we need to go to church or why I need to believe, and why I need to worship, it makes me sure about going to the Sunday services. What makes me go to church with happy heart is the cell group meeting.

As she describes, the cell group meetings reinforce the importance of the Church community in leading a Christian life.

The *gooyuk* members through the weekend meetings form sort of an alliance that benefits each other. The resident elders provide the transient members with spiritual and secular guidance through these meetings. The elders with longer Christian experiences comfort the younger members in relaxed settings outside of the Church building. These meetings held at members' homes, help them understand each other better. Unlike at the Church, where formality is inevitable, meeting at homes allow the members to interact as families.

The Church units, the building, and weekend meeting altogether create times and places for the members to be Christians and Koreans. Tangible aspects of the Church, such as the building and its rooms allowed the members to separate places for sacred worship and for secular sharing. Intangible aspects such as Bible study sessions served as a vehicle to strengthen the member relationships. Each member's role in both administrative and ministry units parallels with the members dual identities of being Korean and being Christian simultaneously. If the physicality of the Church frames the member identity, the rituals further explain spirituality of these Koreans.



Figure 10 *Gooyuk* meeting at the Church



Figure 11 Grace *gooyuk*



Figure 12 Fellowship at the Hope *gooyuk* leader's home

CHAPTER 5. RITUALS

As with most religions, the Sunday worship services at the Korean Baptist Church of Baton Rouge entails ritualistic elements that strengthen group solidarity, such as prayers, music, reciting the Bible verses, feasts, and use of symbolism of Cross (Schultz and Lavenda 1998:167-168). The beginning and ending prayers signals the beginning and ending of the worship, music touches individuals' emotions and links them to the Holy Ghost's presence, and stories from the Bible reminds the members of the sufferings that the Israelites experienced in foreign countries before they entered the Promised Land. This suffering is transposed onto the Korean's sufferings in a new country and comforts the members spiritually.

Ritual solidifies a group's spiritual ties within a religious community. Without the ritual, which is "the performance of ... invariant sequences of formal acts and utterances (Rappaport 1999:24)," a Korean Christian community in Baton Rouge cannot be called a religious community. Sunday worship services followed by a fellowship lunch provide the members opportunities to strengthen their identities: Korean Christians. Through religious practices and social interaction, Koreans reconfirm their identity as Christians in the United States, instead of feeling marginalized as foreigners whose presence is invisible. Through reciting passages from the Paul's teachings toward non-Israelites that Good News is God's gift to foreigners also. Koreans may be in a new country, but their Christian identity ensures their presence in the United States.

5.1. Sunday Morning Worship Service

The official worship beginning time printed on the program is 11 o'clock, but the service does not begin until 11:10. Praise worship, which is worshipping with gospel

songs, precedes the service. The praise worship is one of the many preparatory events that take place on Sundays before the solemn worship. The choir members arrived at the Church around ten a.m. and begin the morning practice. Members of the Women's Missionary Association also arrive earlier to prepare the Sunday lunch, and the praise team also begins setting equipments up for the praise worship. Around ten a.m., the Church becomes alive with the hustle and bustle of everyone's getting ready for the Sunday. The pastor is in his office, reading over the sermon, and holds a Bible study for those who are unable to meet during the cell group meetings. Children who arrive early with their parents run about the Church.

As with all services, the Sunday worship service is heavily scripted. Prayers, songs (except for those sung during the praise worship), and Bible passages are prepared in advance and are printed on the program. Although the program is handed out to all members, the program is not needed to the members since they know the sequence by heart. When the pastor made a mistake of skipping a prayer after offering, a friend of mine whispered in my ears, "What happened to the prayer?" Although unspoken, the highly scripted sequence of the worship demands strict adherence.

The praise worship begins around 10:45, as the choir finishes the practice. Most of the Praise songs are contemporary gospel songs that are also popular in Korea. Hymn songs are used mainly during the worship. When the leader of the praise worship leads "만복의 근원 하나님 the Doxology" around 11:10, it signifies the end of the praise worship and the beginning of the service. When the song ends, a silent prayer by the pastor follows. The pastor begins this prayer with a biblical phrase. After the verses, he begins a prayer while the congregation lowers their heads and closes their eyes. When the

prayer is over, the choir sings a follow up song signaling the end of the prayer, and the pastor proclaimed the beginning of the worship by telling the congregation to turn a page of the hymnbook. The pastor also asks the congregation to stand up to sing together.



Figure 13 Praise team



Figure 14 Praise team from the side of the sanctuary

[광고 사항]

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기념예배 순서 담당자 21-22(주일-월) 양육관 출타합니다.

[교회봉사위원]

교회 장소	1부 장의	2부 장의	3부 장의	4부 장의
일 자	일 자	일 자	일 자	일 자
03/20	김준환 조현철	03/14	박영철 장희준 장문철	이현주 이대형
03/27	이진용 장신영	03/21	최수영 최현욱 조만경	소민호 김준형
04/03	이상준 양종태	03/28	김경환 김선애	박희철 이진용
04/10	김재국	04/04	박대규 류 리	이상엽

[공동체를 위한 기도제목]

- ✦ 기도사역팀/성경훈련팀/전도사역팀/성경독서팀을 위해서...
- ✦ 김도형 어린이 - 잘 알고 말하며 자라도록...
- ✦ 이현영(이은영 성도 친부) - 눈 수술후 회복을 위해서...
- ✦ 장창환(관절 회복) 주매자(장 재발-장민석 목사 부모)
- ✦ 임정옥(신부전환-유지은 사모 모친)

[주일 자택 가정예배]


전 송 : 31/169/171/179
읽을말씀 : 이사이53:1-6
생각할점 : *다들 성경에 나타난 예수 그리스도의 수난을 묵상해 봅니디.

- 구대, 수음을 병들, 황을 침, 금 밖으심을 당함(사50:6)
- 팔리고 상히시며 정계받고 채찍에 맞으심(사53:5)
- 성부 하나님으로부터 버림을 받음을 경험(막15:34)
- 목재의 죽음을 당하심(발전3:18) 조종,말시,무시당함(사53:3)
- 이 모두가 나를 잘 가르쳐서 구원기 위한 대속죄 희생이셨음

기도제목 : 1) 예수님 고난의 의미를 깊이 깨닫고 구원에 감사케 하소서...
2) 예수님의 남은 고난에 복음 사역하도록 동용하게 하소서...
3) 각종 성경공부가 은혜 가운데 진행되어 질 수 있도록...
4) 교회,가정,개인에 건강한 하나님의 복음으로 세워지도록...
5) 밝은 헌인 사회와 지역 교회의 사명 완수를 위하여...

배튼루지 한인 침례교회

KOREAN BAPTIST CHURCH OF BATON ROUGE



교회목표: 제자삼아 가르쳐 지키게 하라.
(마28:19-20)

담당목사: 소재훈 (Rev. Jae Hoon So, Pastor)
목 사: 장민석 (Rev. Min-Seok Jang, Assist. Pastor)
전 도 사: 김대석 (Mr. Dae Seok Kim, Children's Ministry)

264 Burgin Ave. Baton Rouge, LA 70808
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2004년도 목표: *추수하는 교회*(눅10:1-20)

주일 예배 순서

The Lord's Day Worship

사회: 소 재 훈 목사
President: Rev. Jae H. So

찬양과 찬양 ----- 다같이
Praise & Worship Together

*찬 양 ----- "만민의 근원 하나님" ----- 다같이
Praise The Oxcology Together

*목회기도 ----- 사회자
Pastoral Prayer President

*찬 송 ----- 31장, "영광의 왕께 다 경배하며" ----- 다같이
Hymn O worship the King all glorious above Together

대위기도 ----- 조현철 집사
Prayer Won C. Cho

찬 송 ----- 171장, "비둘기같이 은유한" ----- 다같이
Hymn Come, gracious Spirit Together

성경봉독 ----- 요 16:5-13 ----- 사회자
Scripture Reading John 16:5-13 President

찬양대 찬양 ----- 여호와는 나의 목자시니 ----- 찬양대
Praise Church Choir

설 교 ----- 성령 하나님을 아십니까? ----- 선우철 목사
Sermon Do you know God, the Holy Spirit? Rev. Charles Sunu

찬 송 ----- 169장, "강물같이 흐르는 기쁨" ----- 다같이
Hymn O spread the tidings round Together

*별찬기도 ----- 사회자
Offering Prayer President

*찬 송 ----- 179장, "이 기쁜 소식을" ----- 다같이
Hymn O spread the tidings round Together

*축 도 ----- 선우철 목사
Benediction Rev. Charles Sunu

(*표는 일어나서 드립니다.)
(*Please Stand Up)

환영 및 광고 ----- 사회자
Welcom & Announcement President

헌금은 각자 예배 전에 뒷편에 마련된 헌금함을 사용합니디

예배시간 안내

주일예배(장년)	매주 주일 오전 10:45
주일예배(아동 및 청소년)	매주 주일 오전 10:45
수요예배(장년)	매주 수요일 오후 7:30
수요예배 (아동 및 청소년)	매주 수요일 오후 7:30
금요구역예배	매주 금요일 오후 7:30
토요일찬기도회	매주 토요일 오전 6:30
브니엘청년모임	매주 토요일 오후 7:30
주일자택 가정예배	매주 주일 오후 8:00

2004년 3, 4월 예배위원

일 자	기 도	헌금 안내	안내 위원	수 요 기 도 회
03/07	송정호			03/03 박이창
03/14	조현철	한재환	전목자	03/10 장창호
03/21	전목자	김선애	이진용	03/17 장민석
03/28	전목자			03/24 조현철
04/04	양종태			02/31 김진남
04/11	최영철	서성의	전목자	02/07 김두운
04/18	서성의	박이창	송정호	02/14 안보훈
04/25	장민석			02/21 이진용

집 사	성경자원	통 역	찬양인도	지휘자	반 주 자
김두운/김진남/양종태/전목자/장민석/서성의	송나호	김영구	조두연/조신준	장민석	최영철
					유지은/임선주

교 회 학 교	교 사	교 사
아 동 부	부 장	박영희
초 등 부	부 장	김희영
중 고 등 부	부 장	송영아

구역예배 및 공과내용

구 역	구역장	교 사	지 난 구역예배	다들구역예배
일 음	조현철	양종태	03/05	56(12)
사 랑	장민석	김희준	03/06	67(13)
은 혜	전목자	서성의		
소 망	최영철	장창호		
은 유	송정호	김두운		

성경봉독 : 마26:36-26:20; 막14:32-14:20; 눅22:29-24:53; 요18: 1-21:25
제 목 : The Passion of the Christ
제 말 : "그가 흘린은 우리의 죄물을 인함으로 그가 삼함은 우리의 죄악을
원함이다"(사53:8)
(참조안은 구역 예배에 참여한 어린이 숫자입니다)

지난주 통계

구 분	시 간	인 원	헌 금
주일예배(장년)	오전 11:00	71명	\$ 2,551.00
주일예배(아동/청소년)	오전 11:00	29명	\$ 15.76
수요예배(장년)	오후 7:30	25명	
수요예배(아동/청소년)	오후 7:30	2명	
구역예배	오후 7:30	명	
토요일찬기도회	오전 6:30	명	
브니엘청년모임	오후 7:30	12명	
총 계		139명	\$ 2,566.76
지정헌금 (2)		\$ 150.00	지정헌금 공년누계 : \$ 1,692.00
도미니카선교		\$ 30.00	선교헌금 공년누계 : \$ 430.00
건축헌금 (0)		\$ 00.00	건축헌금 공년누계 : \$ 100.00
해당예산 : \$ 19,070.00		주일헌금 누계 : \$ 18,772.41	

(주일 헌금 누계는 지정/선교/건축 헌금을 제외한 금액입니다)

- * 성일조(13):최영철/안보훈, 조두연/조현철, 이수복, 장민석, 이진용, 장민석/유지은, 송정호/김진남, 김동선/전목자, 김대석, 한재환/김선애, 이경규/송정호, 양종태/최수영, 소재훈/관영숙
- * 감사헌금(12):부흥성회:조현철/이재훈, 김동선/전목자, 소재훈/관영숙, 석유리, 이창규/김희준, 한재환/김선애, 서성의/박이창, 최영철/안보훈 (부흥성회 주일 감사헌금):조현철/이재훈, 서성의/박이창, 김영애, 박영희
- * 도미니카 선교지(1):양종태/최수영
- * 기타 지정헌금(2):이창규(헌금), 장민석(아선교회)
- * 세선자/반전자/백금자(이상금/조명영님도 인도)
- * 금주헌금:성재훈 집사
- * 헌 물:헌금위원회 및 안내위원 표창, 소령 냉창고(관동선/전목자)
- 은봉기(매회성/박계원)목과대 및 찬교실 목사6개(조현철/이재훈)

Figure 15 The program

After the congregation finishes singing, they are asked to sit down, and the pastor begins reciting a Bible verse for today's sermon. Reciting the Bible verse is an important communal performance for Baptists. As Miles Richardson explained, "In the Baptist Sunday Service...the preacher himself selects the text as part of the sermon's message. He reads from the pulpit, but invites others to turn to their Bibles and read silently along with him...Since Baptists have rejected any physical, iconic manifestation of the sacred, [the pastor] reads the passages with considerable vigor, as if the sound of his voice alone would establish the presence of the holy" (2003:201). As this passage describes, instead of other ritualistic practices of using incantation, spiritual foresights, and prophesying, the use of Bible verses solely serves as a sacred, spiritual force that strengthens the members' spiritual commitment as Christians.

One of the strong Baptist traditions observed in the worship service is an invitation to the pulpit that the pastor makes after his sermon. Although it is a form of an invitation, it is slightly different from the traditional Baptist invitation where the members are called to walk down to the pulpit. Instead, at the end of the sermon, the pastor asks the congregation to close their eyes and show their confession and dedication in silence. When everyone lowers their heads and closed their eyes, the pastor asks "if you have not accepted Jesus as your savior in the past but want to accept him at this moment, raise your right hand to signal your confession only to God." Then the pastor thanks those who raised their hands and asks one more time, "If there is anyone who has accepted Jesus as their savior but has not committed to lead a life of a devoted Christian, then raise your right hand to show only to God." Inviting the members in silence and anonymity is understood in terms of Korean cultural trait that Koreans' evasive tendency to avoid

public confession of admitting their frequent attendance at the Church without a faith.

When the pastor is satisfied with the responses to the invitation, he concluded with

“Thank you, God has seen. God understood.”

After the invitation, the congregation sings another hymn song while the collection baskets go around, then the pastor asks the congregation to stand up once more to pray together. The pastor always thanks God for allowing “us” to have the abundance to be able to make offering of the day, and allowing “us” to take portions of our humble income and give to God in return as a token of thanks to His blessings. After the offering and the prayer, the congregation sings one more hymn song, and then the pastor says Benediction. After the benedictions, the president of the deacon makes announcement and asks one of the members to come and say a prayer for the fellowship. The fellowship prayer is said in the sanctuary before everyone leaves the room so that no one misses the prayer. This prayer signals the end of the whole service and allows the members to leave the room. Then the members head out to the fellowship hall and share the lunch together.

As discussed earlier, the language of the worship is in Korean. For any English-speaking member and/or visitors, the Church provides translation service. However, the English translation of the sermon lacks conceptualization cues for the listeners to understand cultural implications the sermon carries. Grace told me that she did not feel any differences between listening to the translated sermons and sermons at an American church⁸ as far as the religious messages the sermons conveyed. However, she confessed,

⁸ Any other churches other than Korean churches are referred to as “American churches” which refers to churches where the majority of the members are non-Korean Americans and the services are in English.

“When listening to the gospel in translation, you are not getting the [full] effects... I was hearing sermons through translations. I did not directly hear what you guys (Koreans) were hearing.” The use of the Korean language enables the members to understand implications of the messages from the sermon more clearly. When I asked Hyeok if she would have preferred to have Bible studies in English, she said “That’d be good too, but I think I won’t be able to finish [reading the material] on time, I would be bugging DoHyung (her son)’s father on every sentence.” The Bible is a history of the people of Israel who lived in the Middle East. So listening to messages that has a Middle Eastern cultural background can be difficult, but when preached in Korean, the members can internalize the teachings and lessons from the Bible as instructions designed for them. The members solidify their identity as Korean Christians through the linguistic practice in ritual performances.

5.2 Seasonality of Christian Meetings

The religious rituals required repeated occurrence. These repeated occurrences include not only the Sunday worship services but also the seasonal meetings. Not as highly scripted as the worship services, these meetings are indexical and repetitious in that they occur as scheduled annual events. But at times, the events do not occur if the Church cannot afford to have them. The Church’s annual events begin with the New Year’s Day candlelight vigil and the midnight service and end with Christmas celebrations. These religious events in addition to traditional Christian holidays, the Church held from May 2003 to January 2004 include a retreat, a revival, a Christian rock concert, and a choir performance. These events were held in the evenings and invited neighboring Korean churches in Lafayette and New Orleans areas as well.

The congregation celebrates a New Year's Day together, and declared their New Year's resolutions to dedicate and devote their lives to God. The candlelight vigil starts around 11:30 p.m. on New Year's Eve in silent prayer. The pastor asks the congregation to pray for the prayer requests, which is a list of items to pray for, during this prayer time. After the long silent prayer session, when the midnight comes, the candles are put out and the service begins with the pastor's prayer. The worship sequence is similar to the regular Sunday service but much shorter in length. Although it is significantly shorter, the service is more solemn since people declare their solemn bows to God for the coming year.

When the spring comes, the Church hosts an annual spring revival. The revival begins on a Friday evening, continues on to Saturday at dawn and the evening, and ends on Sunday morning. A guest speaker from another church is invited to give sermons at all four services, and the guest speaker is usually a personal acquaintance of the pastor. The topic or theme for the revival is announced one month ahead, and posters are put up on the Church bulletin board and in the stores where Koreans frequent. The pastor contacts other Korean churches in the vicinity, including Lafayette, New Orleans, and Fort Polk. The attendance from these other Korean churches depends on the guest speaker's fame in those churches.

Before and after each of these four services, the Women's Missionary Association prepares food for fellowship. Since the Church has such high rate of personnel changes in the administrative units, sometimes the Church skips these annual revivals.

Unwillingness or inability on members' part to carry out these responsibilities seems to spring from having too many roles and responsibilities each individuals can bear. One

person may be asked to sing gospels during the Praise worship, prepare a dish, arrange flowers, and take care of the guest speaker for the day.

Another holiday in the spring is the Easter, which is one of the most celebrated Christian holidays at the Church. Spring-cleaning is in order, pots of white lilies fill the sanctuary, and the teachers are busy with filling the Easter baskets for the children. Along with the white lilies, white dresses and suits the members wear also brighten up the day. It is customary for Korean Christians to wear white dresses on Easter, as my grandmother does, but since many student members do not have variety of clothes to wear according seasons, mostly the elders dress in cream or whites when attending the dawn service. At dawn, the congregation in a prayer service commemorates the time of Jesus' resurrection. Although the exact time of the resurrection is not known, the dawn service is to reenact the occasion, and attending the service signifies the members' willingness to follow His footsteps.

On this special day, new members are born. Before the main service begins at 11, baptism is given to those who have not been baptized in the Baptist tradition. The Baptistery is filled with warm water early in the morning; the praise worship ends a bit earlier; then the baptism begins. The pastor, holding the Holy Bible, takes his stand in the middle of the baptistery and makes a short speech about the Baptism. He reads the short passage from the Bible: "Go ye therefore, and... baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19). Then a member, also clad in white robe descends into the baptistery, and the pastor baptizes him/her. After the individuals are baptized, the praise team leads praise worship again until the pastor and the baptized get ready for worship.

The Sunday school presents a special event during the Easter Sunday service. Little girls dress up in white dresses, and boys are tidier than usual. Then, the children enter the sanctuary, take their seats on the first three rows of the pews, and wait for their turn to present themselves on the stage and sing a hymn song or two in front of the congregation. This delightful performance usually brings out laughter among the parents and at times, frightful tears among the children. After the performance, the children take their seats, and a youth pastor, who is in charge of the children's ministry, delivers a short sermon in English. Since the children feel more comfortable with English, the language used in the Sunday school is English. After the sermon, the children exit the sanctuary to go to their classrooms. Then they hunt for eggs and receive gifts from teachers.

After the children leave the sanctuary, the pastor, who is now dry and dressed in a suit, begins the service. The sermon is celebratory for Jesus' resurrection and commemorative of God's promise that Jesus will return. Bible verses from Matthew, chapter 28 that describes Magdalene and the other Mary's encounter with an angel at the entrance of Jesus' tomb. These women heard the great news that Jesus resurrected. The title of the sermon reads "Jesus Lives Again!" The resurrection symbolizes His victory over all evil in this world. The lesson is that we, the children and followers of Jesus, also must win over battles with the evil in the world as Jesus has done. Then the reiteration of Jesus' teaching of "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations" follows. Jesus told His disciples to convert non-Jewish people, and just like those non-Jews of His time, the Bible is telling Koreans to become evangelized and evangelize others. From this proclamation, the chosen people are no longer only the people of Israel, but people of all nations--including Koreans. To spread the Gospel to all nations, the teaching cannot be accomplished

individually. The collective effort of the members encouraging, checking, and teaching each other within the Church community must be done to achieve the goal of “teaching all nations.”

The next Christian holiday Korean Christians observed is the family month in May. The entire month is reserved for remembering importance of a family and reminding the members to be a good father/mother, son/daughter, and husband/wife. Sermons for the month are divided into four categories: Children’s week, Parents’ week, Roles of Husband and Wives. As the pastor tells the congregation “May is family month and is a part of Korean Christian tradition...from our ancestor’s time, we have commemorated May. The reason for commemorating family values is because there are many aspects to improve. Through these weeks, we have opportunities to reflect on how to live.”

The messages given during this month are somewhat anti-Confucian in that the pastor points out authoritative, one-sided parenting of Koreans and urge the parents to be more democratic. The pastor reminds the congregation, “Children are God’s endowed gift, so we must love them unselfishly. One way to love children is to encourage them, so we must become encouraging parents at home to our children, and adults at the Church to other children. Children must be treated as individuals with physical affection. Since Korean parents who grew up with no physical contacts with their parents [due to Confucian cultural background], they are not accustomed to hugging and kissing their children, but it is important to give them hugs and kisses as much as possible.” The pastor reiterates God’s delegation to raise the children in Christian values, and Christian ways of raising children sometimes translates into leaving the children alone and not correcting their misbehavior.

The second week is reserved for parents. On this day, the elders of the Church over sixty years of age wear a corsage, prepared by the flower committee, on their chest. Originally Mother's day was introduced to Korea when the U.S. occupation during the post-Korean war era, then it became the Parents day in Korea because of the strong patriarchal, Confucian social order. When Korean government adopted American holiday of honoring mothers, Korean fathers protested and demanded same respect, so May eighth is commemorated as Parents day. The Parents Sunday service has a special sermon about honoring one's parents, and during the fellowship, a separate table for the "parents" of the Church is set up. During the day, the elders of the Church become the "parents" for the members who cannot honor their biological parents due to geographical separation from them. This Confucian cultural practice is justified in Christian paradigm when the pastor reminds us that God has instructed us to "obey thy parents" in Ten Commandments. Since it is written in the Bible, according to Baptist tradition, it must be obeyed and observed.

The following two weeks in May are reserved for husbands and wives. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the Church is subject to Christ, so let the wives to be their own husbands in every thing. Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Ephesians, King James Version 5:22-25). As the head of the house, a husband must assume the role as the leader of his household and love his wife with willingness to sacrifice; a wife must obey the husband since God made him the head of the house, as Jesus is the head of the church.



Figure 16 Parents of the Church



Figure 17 Prayer before the meal on parents' day



Figure 18 Fellowship on Parents' day

Inevitably, following this biblical passage, the statuses of husbands, fathers, and male members of the Church become higher than the statuses of women, and the roles of men clearly becomes as leaders and women's as followers. This paradigm is a perfect example of parallelism between Confucian social code and Baptist paradigm. Together, they create a powerful social stratum within the Church.

Two major holidays commemorated in the fall are: Korean Thanksgiving day, *Chusok*, and Thanksgiving Day. The first holiday *Chusok* is a Korean traditional holiday that the members of the Church commemorate. This holiday is strictly Korean in that this day was remembered to pay respect to the ancestors. Confucian in nature, *Chusok* is one of the most celebrated holidays in Korea. On this day, Koreans of the Church celebrate together by sharing traditional foods, which will be discussed further in the next chapter.

The last holiday that closes the seasonal events of the Church is Christmas. The Church is decorated with glittering lights, sparkling bulbs, red Poinsettias, and Christmas trees. The choir prepares Christmas Cantata, children perform a play, and the members who have not left the town during the winter break get together at the Church on Christmas Eve. Birth of Jesus Christ the savior is celebrated, and the members are reminded of Jesus' humble beginning of his birth in a manger. The congregation is also reminded that He came to the earth, not to be raised high as a king but to suffer and die for our sins. Even though the message is to remind the members to be humble, the members on this day share festivity, and the Church glows with all the beautiful decoration and people's generosity.

Most rituals at the Church follow Baptist tradition in formality, and the messages shared among the members foster Christian values on the members to help them grow

spiritually. The religious support transforms the suffering the members experience as their destiny as Christians. As Jesus suffered until His last day on earth, the members are to remember the day to return to God and endure the worldly hardship. Incorporated with Korean cultural traits, Christian holidays and seasonal events together create a Christina community in which the members can find their identities and further help them to adjust in this new world.

5.3 Sunday School for Children and Youths

The children (here I include teenaged youths that are not in college yet) of the Church are mostly 1.5 generation Koreans who moved to America with their Korean parents. These children possess some linguistic competence in Korean and are fully immersed in English. Code switching occurs most frequently among the children since they do not possess complete command in Korean. Toddlers and pre-kindergarteners speak Korean if they stay at home with their mothers. The instructional language for the children who are not in school is Korean, and the Baton Rouge community Korean Language School teaches them the reading and writing Korean as well. However, once these children begin their formal education, they use English.

Among 27 children listed on the Church directory, in the Sunday school, ten of them were in the pre-school class, twelve were in grade school class, and five were in the youth class. Although the classes are divided according to the ages, some children will attend older kids classes if their siblings are in upper class so the attendance in these classes fluctuates.



Figure 19 Some of the children of the Church (lined up for a photo shoot)

The Sunday school worship for children is separated from the main worship services I have described earlier. The children's ministry is called "Sunday school" although it is not the same as what the Southern Baptists would call the Sunday school. Here again, we see borrowing Baptist wordings but its internalization of becoming Korean Christian practice.

The children's worship also begins at 11 o'clock with the praise. Grace, one of my informants, leads this praise worship. She picks the songs that she has known from her youth days in Wisconsin and what she hears on the Christian radio programs. She leads the praise with a guitar and it is the only instrument used in the praise worship for children, unlike the adults' praise worship with many modern instruments. Many times, the children do not pay attention; some of them complain of sleepiness; others maintain frown face and turn away from the teachers. The teachers express their frustration about the situation, but the teachers normally do not tell the parents how the children behave

during the service. Fearful of losing their face or shaming the parents, the teachers do not tell the parents and just try to ignore the children's lack of enthusiasm.

Interestingly, unlike invariable, highly scripted adults worship service, the children's worship service changes its program as the ministering youth pastors change. When I made the last time observation, a new youth pastor had been in charge for a month or so. The worship service had similar features, but did not have the exact sequence. During the praise, they sang about four contemporary Christian songs, then the praise leader, Grace asked one of the children to collect offerings and pray after the collection. Then, the youth pastor took his position at the podium and began his sermon with a prayer in English. The youth pastor spoke very slowly so that he would not make mistake with his pronunciation. He was a bit conscious about his English at first, but as he began speaking, he was more focused. The sermon involved questions and answers format. After the worship service, the children grouped into classes according to ages and began the Bible study.

The children in the Church are really not visible in discourses among members. Most of the committees are concerned with the Church businesses for the adults. The children's experience in American schools and institution leave the parents feeling of estrangement from their children since the parents do not go through the same experiences. Also, experiences the adults have on teaching Sunday schools from Korea are different from the Southern Baptist guidelines, so the lack of competency on how to teach becomes a problem. However, this issue is not addressed to the Assembly of Congregation. Voiceless children are left with teachers who run the Sunday school by trial and error methods. I suspect the differences in adult ministry and children's ministry

lie in the fact that the children and adults do not share the same cultural understanding. The children who do speak Korean and who are educated in American schools are people with different cultural experiences from their parents whose language is in Korean and who were educated in Korean schools.



Figure 20 Sunday school Bible study session

Sunday worship services and other religious rituals at the Church reinforce the members' identity as Christians on regular basis. Whether highly scripted like the Sunday services or roughly planned, these religious events remind Koreans of the Church of their "homeless" lives as Koreans in a new country. Rootless as their status may in that their ethnicity makes their status in the U.S. as minorities, these Koreans of the Church internalize their sufferings as sufferings Christians must endure. These rituals and biblical passages allow the members to be comforted spiritually and lesson their anxiety stemming from living as marginalized people.

If the rituals and religious activities shape and form the Christian identity of the members, sharing common foods reinforced Korean ethnic identity of the Koreans of the Church.

CHAPTER 6. FOODS

Next to sharing of a common language, consuming the same foods is a powerful tool for enforcing ethnicity of a group. Especially for the members at the Korean Baptist Church of Baton Rouge, the sharing of a meal after the Sunday worship service is an important event that also completes the ritual. Tendency to adhere to same food may be common to all people within a culture as it is stated in the following passage:

It is easiest to see how food choices reflect the eater's identity when we focus on culinary conservatism. Humans cling tenaciously to familiar foods because they become associated with nearly every dimension of human social and cultural life...Food thus entwines intimately with much that makes a culture unique, binding taste and satiety to group loyalties. Eating habits both symbolize and mark the boundaries of cultures (Gabaccia 1998:8).

As with rituals, cooking and sharing a meal among a religious community enhance the spiritual sensitivity of participants.

Not only do ritual meals connect participants to invisible beings, but they also perform critical social functions. Eating in ritual contexts can reaffirm or transform relationships with visible others. Rituals and beliefs surrounding food can also powerfully reinforce religious and ethnic boundaries...Like all culturally defined material substances used in the creation and maintenance of social interactions, food serves both to solidify group membership and to set groups apart (Mintz and Du Bois, 2002:107,109)

As illustrated in these passages, sharing Korean cuisine reinforces the group identity as Koreans in the Church; unconscious refusal to consume American food, that is non-Korean food, can be explained as a conscious effort Koreans make to maintain their ethnic identity. Hyeok also does not consume non-Korean foods, Grace wishes that the Church would serve more Korean dishes for the Sunday lunch, and *Samonim* utilizes the mealtime for evangelizing the members and at

the same time, socializing with them. The desire to consume Korean meals clearly illustrates the members' willingness and active efforts to create a separate cultural identity from the "American" culture. These communal meals include the Sunday lunch, feasts followed by religious celebrations, and Korean holiday celebrations.

6.1. Sunday Fellowship Lunches

Nostalgia belongs to sojourners. Removed from familiar customs, life style, and aroma of spices, Koreans in Baton Rouge, long most of all for warm, home cooked meals. Since the economic boom in the 1980s, Korean life style has become similar to that of the U.S. in terms of housing, clothing, highways, transportations, and electronic devices that make living more convenient. However, despite the infrastructure and material culture have changed since modernization, taste has not changed as rapidly for our Church members generations.

One of the biggest cultural differences the members express is the food. Often these Koreans complain about the cafeteria food at LSU dining rooms and their lack of knowledge of restaurants that serve foods their stomachs will not reject. A friend of mine once told me after having pancakes for a meal, "I feel full in the stomach, but I am not satisfied. I need to eat *Bab* to feel completely satisfied and not feel hungry." So the Church's Sunday lunches offer them a chance to experience home cooking in a strange place called Baton Rouge. This meal means more than just a meal. It means fellowship with other members, reminiscence, supports, assurance, pacifying nostalgic hunger, and the Korean identity.

As I briefly mentioned earlier, the fellowship lunch served at the Church finalizes the Sunday ritual. After the worship, the congregation gathers around in the fellowship hall and shares their stories of the past week while having lunch together. For the pastor and other Christian leaders, the meal is an extension of their ministry; for students, the dishes satisfy their nostalgic hunger; for women who cook for these meals, these foods give them sense of purpose; for the elders of the Church, lunches allow them to meet with familiar faces and speak Korean again.

The members of the Women's Missionary Association (WMA) prepare and serve the meal. To make the job efficient and to lessen the burden of frequent cooking, the WMA members are divided into *jo*, groups. Each of these cooking *jo* has three or four women including a leader. The leader of *jo* is always an elderly lady, and most of them are *jibsa*, deacons. The leaders decide menus and contribute most of the cost for the materials. The rest of them are student wives and they mostly contribute their time and service. The Church program lists the cooking schedule for a month, so each member reads them to find out when they are scheduled to cook.

When the designated Sunday approaches, each group meets together (or telephone each other) to decide the menu. Lately, the cost of the meal has forced them to decrease the number of dishes; fortunately, the quality has not declined. Once the menu is decided, the leader goes grocery shopping over the weekend and finishes preparation on Saturday afternoon. My informant Hyeok's group has three members, and their leader takes care of grocery shopping for the main dish. Then, on a Saturday, they get together at the Church and wash vegetables, chop the ingredients, make broth if they are making a soup,

and/or marinate. The meal is always Korean except on Thanksgiving when the Church serves Turkey with cranberry sauce.

At the end of the closing prayer of the worship service, the designated members leave the sanctuary before the congregation, and go directly to the kitchen to start serving the lunch. The bowls are taken out of cupboards, rice is scooped, and plastic wraps are uncovered before the congregation arrives at the fellowship hall.

The staple dishes are 밥 *bab* (cooked rice), and 김치, *Kimchi* (marinated vegetables). These two items are almost never absent at a Korean table. The Women's Missionary Association makes sure that the Church is never out of Kimchi on Sundays. Kimchi is a pickled vegetable dish. Mostly Napa cabbages are used but in the summer, other greens are marinated and matured. These rare ingredients are available at a Korean-owned store named Oriental Market located near the Church. Unlike a western cuisine, Korean main dishes are side dishes that can be consumed with the cooked rice, unless it is a noodle dish. So, overall, Korean meals always include a bowl of cooked rice and occasional noodles.



Figure 21 *Kimchi*

The kitchen is very small for a space to cook for sixty to seventy people every week. It resembles a narrow hallway with a window on the right. To the right into the kitchen and behind the open door is a small refrigerator that is adjacent to the counter top and cabinets. This refrigerator is used for storing ingredients to be used on the coming Sunday, sauces, containers of left over food, chopped garlic, onions and scallions, and other left over fresh vegetables. On top of the countertop is an opening to the dining hall, and the rice and soup are served here. Under the countertop are cabinets that hold serving plates, utensils, storage bags, trash bags, small plastic cups, and small pots. To the left of the door sits an unused convection oven that functions as a surface area only. Next to this convection oven are large industrial sized sinks with two faucets. Many vegetables and fruits are washed and prepared here. Over the sinks are more cabinets that hold dishtowels, tablecloths, Corning cups and plates, and other odds and ends that need storage. Next to the sinks is an industrial sized gas oven with four cook tops. The WMA raised fund through a garage sale to purchase this oven and a new fridge. Next to the oven and against the wall is a small countertop that holds a microwave oven. Over this countertop is another set of cabinets that hold dry noodles and dry spices. This countertop is connected to the wall that has a stained-glass looking wall unit that is seen throughout the church. In front of this wall is the rice cooker. This rice cooker uses a small propane gas tank, and the president of the WMA lights the cooker right before the service. Right next to the cooker is also another small countertop that connects to an adjacent wall with the opening toward the hallway. Over and under the countertops are again more cabinets that hold coffee and condiments for coffee, soy sauce, cooking oils, fish sauce, vinegar and other spice that need to be reached quickly. The bottom cabinets

are connected to the cabinets that hold serving dishes in an upside-down L shape. The ladies of the association donated many of the ceramic serving plates and crystal punch bowls. Diligently prepared dishes are served on these plates on a separate table in the middle of the dining hall. Only on special occasions such as revivals, singing praise nights, and other celebratory occasions the most delicate serving wears such as punch bowls are used.



Figure 22 The kitchen

As described thus far, the kitchen is too small for the members to cook comfortably. However, these women do not raise this issue. Instead they cope with the given settings as any good Korean, obedient wife would. Korean women at the Church who still carry Confucian mind-set of being obedient and submissive carry out their duties in silence. Rather than complaining about the small size and cramped work space, these women try

to enjoy their physical contacts with one another. When asked if she doesn't feel burdened to cook, Hyeok always answered, "No, I enjoy cooking. I get to socialize with them."

Utensils and serving wears used for cooking and eating are designed for unique Korean cuisine, but with modest adjustment. Typically, cooked rice is served in a small bowl; however, since the storage unit is limited and washing them afterwards can be cumbersome, disposable plates replace the bowls. Also, each side dish is served in separate small dishes, with the same reason as the rice; each person scoops side dishes on their plates. Stainless steel bowls are used for multi-purposes, chopsticks and spoons accompany the plates. These stainless bowls are also used widely in Korea for its resistance to stain and absorption of strong garlic smell. Except a few children who do not possess skills in using chopsticks, everyone uses chopsticks and spoon for eating the meal. Knowing how to use chopsticks is important table etiquette among Koreans and can be an indicator of anyone's being culturally Korean.

Other items that are unique to Korean cooking include enormous colanders for straining water out of salted cabbages, cooling down noodles, and washing vegetables. These colanders are round, shallow and approximately a yard in diameter. Also, identical in shape as the colanders are round stainless basins that are used for marinating Kimchi, salads, meat, and many other dishes that use garlic, red chilly peppers, and many other sauces that can leave strong smell and stains on plastic. These basins are less than a foot in depth and rims of the basins are almost vertical to the bottom so the content do not spill over the basins.

Since the Church does not have sufficient fund to create a feast every week, except for religious or cultural holidays, these main side dishes are normally a stew, a marinated meat dish, or a soup, and one or two of these items are normally served.

Menus for the meal vary according to the season. The food practice here is a replication of Koreans' consumption of seasonal foods. Korea has four seasons unlike Louisiana where the summer is extensively longer and where winter is relatively mild. Even though the seasons in Baton Rouge are not as distinctive, the members of the Church who still retain the taste bud, cook these seasonal dishes they used to consume while living in Korea.

As spring approaches, the dishes tend to be more vegetable-oriented as a reminder of warmer weather that allows newly sprouted greens to be available. As I have described earlier, traditionally in Korea, the only vegetable dish available during winter was *Kimchi*, so when the spring came and the mountain herbs started sprouting, the women prepared salad dishes with new herbs. A freshly marinated, tossed *Kimchi* instead of fermented *Kimchi* is served on the table.

In summer, the women begin to serve cold dishes, as they would if they were Korea. Aside from the replicating cultural practice of making Korean summer foods, cooking for hours in a small kitchen is quite painful for these ladies. Naturally cold soups replace hot stews and soups, and at times, freshly tossed salad replace *Kimchi*, if not it accompanies *Kimchi* on the table. Aside from cold soup, *Bi-Bim-Bap* is the most frequently served dish in the summer. But during my research, *Bi-Bim-Bap* was served well into the fall because of the convenience of serving it since it is a one-bowl dish. The literal translation of *Bi-Bim-Bap* is "mixed cooked rice." This dish is served in the same kind of big round

stainless steel bowls that are used to serve a stew or soup in the winter. The rice goes into the bottom of the bowl first, then a variety of stir-fried and thinly chopped vegetables, a cooked ground beef, a fried egg, and *Gochujang*, a red hot chilly bean paste tops the rice and make a colorful display of plentiful of summery vegetables the earth has produced. Sometimes cold cucumber or seaweed soup with slight hint of vinegar is served to balance off the spicy and salty taste of *Bi-Bim-Bap*.



Figure 23 Sharing summer greens

Out of the four seasons, fall is the only season that does not have particular fall dishes. However, a fall holiday such as *Chusok*, the Korean Thanksgiving Day, and the Thanksgiving Day make up for what could be humdrum menus of regular Sunday lunches. The meals for the holidays will be discussed further in the following section.

In the winter, many hot dishes such as *yukgyejang*, curry, *tzajang* (black bean sauce with stir fried vegetables), soups, and dumpling soup, are served along with the rice. *Yukgyejang* is a soup like stew whose broth is made from beef chunks, which are later on

taken out of a pot, cut into smaller pieces, and added later to the bowl when served. The broth is then seasoned with red-hot chilly oil and salt. This dish is one of the favorites among Koreans in cold winter days.

The soup also contains many dried herbs and vegetables, onion, garlic, and bean pastes. I have heard someone boasting on how long ago in Korea a foreign missionary had observed that Korean peasants only ate *Kimchi*, rice and bean paste stews everyday, but they were so healthy, and later on it was revealed that the bean paste contained many nutrients and high protein.

During the winter months when fresh ingredients are not available, Koreans try to serve “protective” food to satisfy the chilled body. These dishes served in winter are believed to warm up one’s body and keep it warm during those cold wintry days. Although the winter months in Baton Rouge are not as cold as in Korea, this food tradition is still maintained.

Once all of the dishes are cooked and prepared, the side dishes along with the utensils are set up on buffet tables in the middle of the dining hall. On the left corner of the tables are plastic containers that hold chopsticks and spoons, and a flat basket of napkins. In the middle of the table is the main side dish or dishes of the day, and the right corner sits a mid-sized punch bowl full of *Kimchi*. Even though each *jo* is responsible for cooking the meal of the day, the president of the WMA oversees full activities from cooking rice, finishing up cooking, cleaning up the kitchen and countertops, taking the plates and bowls out, and setting up the table. She sees that all of the preparatory activities are completed before the beginning of the service. Ultimately, these women facilitate the congregation to have fellowship time in which a new student receives information on

where to buy necessities, men exchange latest news from Korea, the elderly ladies hand out candies to the children, and the elders discuss when to fix the old facilities. As Samonim once told me, “[the members] are people who would never be able to see each other if they didn’t meet during the fellowship. They do not have common ground to meet during the week.”



Figure 24 Winter Food: Beef soup with Korean radish



Figure 25 Sharing Winter Foods

6.2 Special Occasional Meals

Aside from the Sunday meals, members of the WMA volunteer to cook for holidays, revivals, celebratory occasions, or any other events that occur throughout the year. As the date of an event approaches, a blank form for volunteers is posted on the Church bulletin board. The menus are already selected and are listed on the form, and each member signs their name next to the dish. The president of WMA consults *Samonim* and other elderly women to decide the menu.

On Korean holidays such as *Chusok*, Korean Thanksgiving in the fall and New Year's day, traditional dishes are served. Since the traditional holidays have prescribed menus, everyone knows what are normally served. *Chusok* is a Korean holiday that is from the past when the country was an agrarian society. The lunar calendar told the farmers when to harvest their rice (Korean Overseas Information Service, 1993:153). This day is celebrated for the harvest and for their ancestor's blessings over the crop. Traditionally people believed that their ancestors watched over the crop affairs, so Koreans believed their ancestor's bless and protect their harvest. However, since the Church's doctrine focuses on God's blessing, the sermon for the day reminds the members that ancestor worship is wrong and is superstitious practice that needs to be thwarted. So, ancestor commemoration does not take place in the Church. The day is commemorated as a Korean traditional holiday.

The celebratory foods served on *Chusok* include: *Bab*, rice cakes, stir-fried fall herbs and vegetables, *jun*, Korean pancakes, cold noodles, *Bulgogi*, Korean barbecue, and many other side dishes. One of the elder ladies prepares rice cakes with rainbow colors and half-moon shaped rice cakes steamed with pine needles for the holidays. Knowing

how to make homemade rice cakes will put any women on a higher status among cooks, since rice cakes are often mass-produced these days.

On January 1, New Year's Day, Koreans eat rice cake soup with dumplings. Except for the rice dumpling, other ingredients like soup base broth vary depending on regions. On January 1, 2004, the rice cake soup base was dried fish. When the soup is served in a stainless steel bowl, it is dressed with *gomyung*, garnishes of thinly sliced cooked eggs, charred dried seaweed slices, a spoonful of cooked ground beef, and chopped scallion. Several members of the group work sort of in an assembly line to dress the soup. One puts the rice cake and soup in a bowl, the next one puts in eggs, then the third person puts in seaweed, and it goes on in this manner for each serving.



Figure 26 *Gomyung*, garnish for the rice dumpling soup

On other celebratory occasions such as annual revivals, fewer dishes are served. Since the revival services begin in the evening, the dishes served are snacks rather than a meal. For these occasions, women prepare mostly “finger” foods. These dishes include two to three different types of sushi, vegetable trays, fried dumplings, rice cakes, chips and dips,

sandwich trays, and fruit trays. Homemade fruit punches with sliced limes are also served along with other soft drinks.

Cooked and prepared by the female members of the Church, these meals serve as a vehicle for the members as a community to reinforce their ethnic identity as one people of Korea. The statuses of each member may be different, but their ethnicity brings these people together as members of the same community. The labor and sacrifice of these women are compensated in intangible manners. The teachings these women receive through the Bible study sessions for the young women, weekend *gooyukyeabae*, sermons from the Sunday worship services together create spiritual force that encourage the women of the Church to be the supporters in the fellowship ministry. Whether the pastor and Samonim are successful at evangelizing during the fellowship, I am not fully aware of the real impact of the meals on evangelism. However, I know that each member cherishes what the sharing of foods brings to them. I also wait for the meal times to share stories, make future appointments, and get to know more of other members of the Church. Having a Korean meal is not just an act of satisfying physical hunger.

Even though the meal is shared in one hall, the men and women of the Church sit apart from each other when eating the meal. Women of the same committees or *yoohaaksaeng* wives sit together; men also from the same committees or units congregate around a table and converse together on topics of common interest. Eating of the meal, as well as the cooking of it, is gendered in the Church. Confucian cultural practice is in full swing when it is a mealtime. The women are discouraged to eat among men, and vice versa.



Figure 27 Finger Foods for fellowship after a choir performance



Figure 28 Mary Lee Donuts served as desserts on a special day



Figure 29 Feasts⁹

⁹ Note the use of spoon and chopsticks.

6.3 What It Means to Have a Korean Meal

Whether it be a regular Sunday lunch, a holiday meal, or fellowship snacks, the foods prepared by the women of the Church, who are considered “mothers,” provide the members with the taste and smell of far away home. The following passage describes the Confucian expectation of women: “In traditional Korean society ...roles of women include...performing hard housework, and maintaining full relations among family members” (Kwon 1995:203). Following this tradition, the women in the Church create atmosphere for the members of the Church maintain “full relations” while sharing food that is product of their “hard housework.”

The connotation of the word *Bab*, “cooked rice” these women prepare, carries much deeper meaning than just a bowl of rice. *Bab* is what mothers prepare for her family. It is what every Korean goes home for after a long day’s work. It is the main course, the referent of Korean food. The reassurance and comfort from tasting and sharing of the foods create an atmosphere where the members can open up to each other more and concretely establish group relationships within Korean Christian community.

For the women of the WMA, serving the meal means sacrificing and giving up one’s self. It means assuming responsibilities and duties that many others do not want to carry out. Some of the ladies have expressed their frustration about the hardship of making Sunday lunches, especially for those who do not know how to drive, since cooking the meal means shopping before Sunday and going to the Church early or before the Sunday to cook. However, the sacrifices involved with cooking the meal are exactly what the association strives to achieve: serving others in the name of Jesus as He also sacrificed

and served to others. The women's missionary members humble themselves in saying, "I am not the only one cooking, and my turn only comes in every few months. It is not too hard to cook on Sundays." Hyeok also said the same thing to me after cooking a meal at the Church even when she was suffering from cold. "It (the cold) is not bad. It's not like I contracted a fatal disease. I don't mind cooking at all. I enjoy it. Cooking is the least thing I can do at the Church...It is different from cooking at home. I am not doing it by myself. I am cooking with others. I enjoy serving my cooking to others." The act of cooking together with other women gives the wives of the students, who lead fairly isolated lives, a chance to meet and share their everyday life stories and exchange information on how to cook for their families. Cooking time for the Sunday lunch is the time these wives share and relate to one another and bond with each other since they are in one on one interaction with one another. Hyeok told me, "some days we go to church and cook and eat together. Then we prepare the ingredients for Sunday lunch...It [preparing for the lunch] is fun for me. Everyone is willing to do it... rather, I'd like to do more, but I can't since I have a baby so I feel bad." As she explains their interaction in cooking together, when a team cooks together, the mother-daughter relationship emerges among the team members. The elder deacon assumes the role of the caring mother who has knowledge and experience in cooking and providing family with good meals, and the younger female members become daughters who learn the practice of cooking through empirical apprenticeship. They also inherit other general homemaking know-how such as child rearing, relationship with husbands, and pregnancy related matters, from the experienced "mothers."

Food shared after the Sunday worship means so much to Koreans of the Church. For those eating, it reminds them of home, so they are satiating both emotional and physical hunger; for those serving, it includes learning and living the life of Christian disciples through serving others as Jesus has done. Women in both Christian and Confucian contexts assume the role of supporters and subordinates. At the Church, the members of the Women's Missionary Association focus on their roles as supporters of their husbands and the children. Sacrifice is a prerequisite of the role as a supporter. A small sheet of paper with printed verses from Ephesians is placed on a cupboard in the kitchen to remind the women of their roles as supporters. The same verses are found on refrigerator doors of the young wives of students. My informant told me that their small group Bible study has taught her that her purpose of being in the United States is to support her husband and her family rather than achieving her own goal.

CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION

Koreans in the Korean Baptist Church of Baton Rouge consciously carry out religious performances while practicing Korean culture. Rather than assimilating to American Southern culture that shares the Southern Baptists tradition, these Koreans utilize the Church to create a place for solidifying their ethnic identities. Although the worship structure follows Baptist tradition and the teachings from the Bible set the philosophical standards among the members, use of Korean language combined with communally consuming Korean meals reinforces group solidarity and identity. Calling other churches “American church” and referring to other foods as “American food” exhibit the Korean perspective on society and their identity as Korean. English is not their language; Pizza is not to be consumed in the Church; and the elders and males are to be minded when encountered. Korean’s tendency to stay within “their ethnic group and culture [is]...not due to their lack of ability [to succeed in the U.S.] but because of their existential alienation from the mainstream of American society (race and cultural marginality)” (Hurh 1998:46).

In addition to the situational separation from the mainstream U.S. culture, parallelism between teachings from the Bible and Confucianism allow the Koreans in Baton Rouge to transform Confucian cultural traits into Christian values. These teachings become internalized and become tools in making Korean identities in the Deep South. Similarities in the Biblical teachings from the patriarchal Israelite society and Confucian, patriarchal society allow the Church members to stratify a social structure among the members. Elders and males assume important roles in carrying out the Church businesses; whereas, the younger and females support and follow decisions made for

them. Emphasis on a family life both in Christian and Confucian culture is expressed in the member dynamics in the Church as well. The elders of the Church who have immigrated to the U.S. during the post-1965 immigration era, assume the roles of the parents, and the younger who are temporarily residing Koreans play the roles of the children to serve the “parents” and the Church. This member-dynamics allow the Church to maintain and continue the very core Korean cultural pattern of emphasizing respecting the parents within a family in the periphery of Christian paradigm.

Korean American’s attachment to Korean cultural values and social attitudes is pervasively strong, particularly with respect to filial piety (honor and obedience to parents), negative attitudes on intermarriage, conservative gender ideology (traditional sex roles), family interest over individual interest, preference for Korean churches, and perpetuation of Korean cultural heritage among posterity. This strong ethnic attachment is largely unaffected by length of residence in the United States (Hurh 1998: 73).

Conversations with Hyeok confirmed that a unique Korean culture separated from the mainstream American culture was created in the Korean Baptist Church of Baton Rouge: “If you want American culture, then you need to go to an American church.”

Many studies have used assimilation theory when looking at immigrants. At the preliminary stage of this research, I also thought about using the assimilation as the theoretical model. However, the more I spent time with the members and the more I observed the cultural patterns sprouting out of member interactions, I found out that no apparent assimilation process occurred. For assimilation to occur, one group’s values and ideas must be viewed as desirable. Although the dominant cultural norm in Baton Rouge is U.S. culture, the members do not really exhibit any desire to become like Americans. Rather, especially among the elders who left Korea a long time ago, show adjustment to a new country with their wishes to continue Korean cultural practices.

At the end of my research, I concluded that an institution such as the Church functions as a place for buffering of culture shock new comers may experience; where hands are extended to new comers settling down in town; the residents exchange the latest news from Korea with new members; and the new comers learn where to go in Baton Rouge in emergency situations.

Further researches on the Christian churches' role in lives of Korean immigrants is needed. While conducting the research, I found out that by far, Koreans are the most institution-seeking immigrant group among Asian immigrants in the U.S. Through the use of institutions like the Church, Koreans create their own ethnic cohort areas so that they will not have to face completely changing their life style. However, Anthropological studies on the meaning of churches for Korean immigrants have not been vigorously pursued, and as my research revealed, the Church served as more than just a religious place but a place for identity making in a society of mosaic cultures.

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APPENDIX: GLOSSARY

Bap: 밥 literal meaning is cooked rice. Represents a prepared meal. 밥먹었어?(Did you eat *Bap*?) is a common greeting among Koreans.

Bibimabap: 비빔밥 rice mixed with herbs, vegetables, meat and egg with hot chilly sauce called *gochujang*.

Chu Sok: 추석 Korean Thanksgiving holiday. Falls on August 15th on lunar calendar. Originated from agrarian society after the rice harvest in the fall to celebrate and commemorate ancestors' blessings on their crop.

Gochujang: hot chilly pepper paste used in Korean cooking.

Gomyung: assortment of garnish that goes on top of soup. Usually on top of the rice dumpling soup or noodle soups.

Gooyuk yaebae: 구역예배 district worship. Weekend bible study group meetings.

Gooyuk: 구역 literal meaning is an area or a district.

Hyungsoo: 형수, wife of an older brother, older male friend, and senior of school. Wives titles change according to the social status of husbands, as is the case in *Samonim*.

Jo: a group.

Jibsa: a deacon. The title is used for anyone who have served as a deacon. Deacons serve for seven years and have a sabbatical if they ask for it. Many deacons do not serve as long as seven years. Once served as a deacon, the title is kept and when someone refers to that person, the last name+*jibsanim* is used. *-nim* is used to signify a respect toward a person and is used as the suffix in the title.

Samonim: a pastor's wife. It refers to a wife of anyone with titles such as pastor, president, managers, or any other leadership roles. In this case, I used the term only for the pastor So' wife since she was the only one I interviewed among other *samonims*.

Tza jang: 짜장 black bean sauce. A dish with stir-fried vegetables mixed with the sauce and served on rice. One of the Chinese-Korean dishes

Yoohaaksaeng: 유학생, students who are in a different country other than their home country.

VITA

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